

Social development of primary aged children through a movement education program

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## Abstract

Unique in Canada, is a university based movement program offered to children aged 1-12 which is diverse and inclusive in its design to foster healthy physical, cognitive, affective and social development. The purpose of this study is to investigate how children's involvement in a weekly movement education program influences their social development. The primary-aged children involved in this research are participants in the university based Saturday morning program, The Children's Movement Program (CMP), in which creative dance, educational gymnastics and developmental games are employed to enhance optimal development. The 15 participants were systematically observed for 8 weeks as they naturally engaged in the program's activities. Interviews were conducted with both children and their caregivers throughout the duration of the program. Particular attention was paid to the perceptions of caregivers regarding the advantages of a program based upon principles of movement education. Results indicate that participation in the program increases children's opportunity to interact socially and address ways in which program content, pedagogy and context encourage social development. A figure was developed with these components to assist teachers in creating inclusive and meaningful movement experiences. 'Content' is referred to as the material to be learned or the desired outcome for the learner. 'Pedagogy' refers to the process in which the student will engage and 'Context' refers to the environment in which the experience occurs (eg. skating rink with playground balls). It is recommended that each is thoroughly addressed individually for its potential in lesson design.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

While there are numerous options for young children to spend their free time, the particular choice made by parents and children contribute positively or negatively to his/her long-term development during the formative years. The Ontario school system considers primary-aged children to be students enrolled between the years of kindergarten and grade three and ranging in age from approximately five to nine years old. Middle childhood is a period of steady progress in physical growth and maturation and in behavioural development (Malina, Bouchard & Bar-Or, 2004) where children learn to initiate play activities, display intelligence, learn creativity, and decipher how to recognize and express emotions (Hilborn, Merki, Merki, Cleary & Middleton, 2004).

These developmental years of a child's life are critical for cognitive, social and emotional development. Therefore, it is important that educators take every step necessary to guarantee that children mature and develop in surroundings where the child's social, emotional and educational needs are met. There is an increased risk for compromised health and safety as learning and developmental delays are often seen in children who live in environments where their developmental needs are not properly met. Failure to devote time and resources during a child's early years may have extended societal effects, including foster care, health care, and education. Therefore, it is in the community's interest to ensure that children develop in safe, loving, and secure environments (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-Child Development, 2007).

### *The Children's Movement Program*

The Children's Movement Program (CMP) is a Saturday morning program offered at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario. The program runs for the duration of 8 weeks beginning in September and again in January. The participants range from ages one to 12 in an all inclusive environment. CMP is based on movement education and incorporates educational gymnastics, creative dance and developmental games. The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of the Children's Movement Program upon the social development of children aged five to nine within a case study framework. The focus of the discussion of social development will be on how the enrolment in the Children's Movement Program assists with socializing primary children through play and physical activity with emphasis on the type of infrastructure,; specifically content, pedagogy and context, needed to support this level of development.

### *Movement in a child's world*

Movement should be at the very center of children's lives, permeating all facets of their development, whether in the physical, cognitive, or affective domain. To refuse children the opportunity to obtain the many benefits of regular physical activity is to deny them the opportunity to experience the joy of movement, the health benefits of activity and a lifetime as confident and competent movers (Gallahue, 1993). The role of play and movement in children's lives create conditions which children develop and learn. Children play in order to understand the world around them, to express themselves, and to practise new skills. Through play, children actively explore, manipulate and respond to their environments and experiences. Play is pivotal in the process of daily interactions with events, people, and things. Play provides the opportunity for children to interact with

the concrete environment allowing children to develop intellectually and acquire social, emotional and physical abilities (Shipley, 1998).

### *Learning*

Learning is a term that is often used synonymously with the term teaching in everyday language as well as official and professional contexts; the use of learning in place of teaching is inappropriate. Learning refers to the outcomes of the learning process that takes place in an individual; the cognitive process which occurs. Learning can also refer to the interaction processes between individuals and their material and social environment. This learning process can be direct or indirect and are preconditions for the inner learning processes covered by meaning (Illeris, 2007). Rink (2006) states that learning can only be inferred from a person's behaviour or performance, performance is observable whereas learning is not. Creating an environment that will allow young people to explore different areas in a self-chosen, unpredictable manner and at the same time produce the sort of skills and knowledge they will need in order to be successful in the world is a question that has been around as long as educators have been asking questions about the purposes of schools and learning (Lesch, 2009). Unfortunately it seems that often the limitations within the answers to effective learning are that subject matters should be pre-determined and highly structured in advance to children learning it (Lesch, 2009). However, one of the primary factors which needs to be present in a learning atmosphere are to keep the learning situations as pure as possible so that a true continuum of experience can occur for those students who are a part of them, meaning that learners are allowed to take their experience in relation to what they are learning to a point of completion. They will be able to satisfy their natural curiosities, unique learning

paths or the inclusion of one category of content into another if possible and not be impeded by preconceived agendas or structures (Lesch, 2009). According to Illeris (2007) learning is not something that only takes place in the single individual. Learning is imbedded in a social and societal context that provides guidelines for what can be learned and how. For example, there is a difference in the nature of the learning that takes place in school, the learning that takes place in working life, and the learning that takes place in everyday life outside of work and school; these different contexts give learning essentially different fundamental conditions.

### *Fundamental Movement Skills*

Children learn fundamental movement skills in a progressive pattern according to a series of identifiable stages. The variety and quality of early skill learning experiences and the freedom given to each child to experience and explore may influence that individual child's chance for acquiring skills earlier or later in comparison to other children (Staniford, 1979). According to Pickup and Price (2007) there are three stages of development: the initial or early mover stage, the intermediate or elementary mover and finally the mature mover. The first stage, the early mover stage is when children attempt to acquire fundamental skills. Examples of fundamental skills are walking, running, jumping, climbing, skipping, throwing and catching. These skills are very important for young children to master during early childhood. They provide a sound foundation on which all later movement, and eventually sophisticated work, sports and leisure skills may be based (Staniford, 1979). Transitioning into the second stage displays that the child appears to have become more skilful. Gallahue and Donnelly (2003) suggest that many adults have not progressed from this stage in a variety of fundamental movement

skills due to insufficient instruction or limited opportunities for practice and development. The final stage of the mature mover is when children usually have achieved mature patterns of fundamental movement skills and work towards a specialized movement skill phase. The phase allows children to apply skills in a range of contexts and continue to become increasingly skilful through further movement opportunities (Pickup & Price, 2007). It is very important for young children to have opportunities to practice and develop skills as early as possible. Children need to be given many and varied opportunities to explore various movement activities.

### *Sporting Culture*

While a plethora of sports camps and specific sport leagues exist (e.g. soccer camp and soccer leagues) they are designed to develop children's specific skills. Based upon a competitive philosophy, these programs do not cater to all children. Le Clair (1992) who examined the role of wellness and the goals of school and recreational programs directs attention to the same question that is asked by many; "If only the special, the above average and the gifted are placed on the teams, what happens to the average and uninspired majority?" (p.18) Sport can socialize children to want to win at almost any cost and to feel badly if they lose (Handel, Cahill & Elkin, 2007). These traits and viewpoints also transfer to the physical education setting, placing the focus on competitiveness and winning, rather than enjoyment and development. The movement to change the focus in physical education from competitive to cooperative is helpful to allow all children the opportunity to develop a love for physical activity and the chance for individual success.



The aim is not to indicate that all involvement in sports is dire; but that children can be socialized into sports and activity in a way that is not always present in the current sport culture of the western society. The participation in sport often develops a culture that displays its own norms and values; frequently referred to as a sports culture or socializing into sport, where emphasis is placed on factors that are not necessarily inherently good.

### *The Children's Movement Program*

At the University of Alberta, the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation offered the Children's Physical Activity and Study Program (CPASP). This program was an inclusive program for children aged two to 12 years, which focused on individual movement skill improvement and learning. Classes were designed to suit each child's cognitive, motor, social and fitness needs, given his or her developmental level. CPASP combined both theory and practice to develop activities that promoted healthy, active, life-long participation in physical activity. The program encouraged children to explore their movement repertoire, respect and accept working with children of all abilities, foster a sense of responsibility, decision making and a leadership role and increase and maintain fitness levels in an enjoyable environment (University of Alberta, Activities Guide, Fall 2006). The idea was then transferred from the University of Alberta in Edmonton to Brock University in Ontario, St. Catharines to establish the Children's Movement Program.

The Children's Movement Program of Brock University was first instituted by Andrea Roberts in 1993 as part of her Bachelor of Physical Education Honours program, and has been offered continuously for the past 17 years. Roberts wished to examine the

possibilities for movement education with young children in a recreational program. The Children's Movement Program was designed to allow the knowledge of movement education to be presented to children of various ages. The vision for the program was derived from Alberta's and Brock's Physical Education curriculum, emphasizing elements of educational gymnastics, creative dance, and developmental games courses to challenge children to be active and try new skills in a positive inclusive environment. Operating as a weekly program on Saturday mornings, the Children's Movement Program also incorporates problem-solving and decision-making skills. This approach to physical education allows all children, regardless of physical ability, the opportunity to participate, aiding them in the development of self-conceptualization and social skills. This unique opportunity offers children the chance to increase both their fitness level and their movement potential in a non-threatening environment. The Children's Movement program has approximately 150 children enrolled in each session (September and January) with an equal gender mix. The participants reside in various areas of Niagara and surrounding regions such as Dundas, Niagara-on-the-lake, Thorold and Welland to attend the program. Advertisements for the program are sent via mail to families previously enrolled in the program. The program is also publicized in the *Niagara's Learning and Leisure guide*, Brock University's *Recreation Services Guide*, the local newspaper, as well as brochures which are distributed to a few local children's centres. The program's cost is 52 dollars per child with a discount for multiple children and for Brock families. Upper year physical education students guide the children and serve as teachers. There are approximately 35 university students acting as volunteers and six student staff members. The children learn new ways of moving that they choose through

problem solving and through their own creativity. Parents or guardians are invited to observe the program (Roberts, 1993). The program is designed to incorporate weekly themes (e.g. Olympic Torch, Space Station) to allow the children to relate to, as well as focus upon, different movement themes (e.g. body shapes) that enable skill development. The goals of the Children's Movement Program for social behaviour are similar to that of the school environment; for example, waiting one's turn, listening and sharing. The rules of free play at CMP are waiting for a turn on the equipment, no body contact, no pushing and have fun!

### *Research Questions*

The purpose of this research is to investigate the effect of the Children's Movement Program (CMP) upon the social development of children aged five to nine.

1. What elements of movement education promote positive social development in the Children's Movement Program; specifically in its content, pedagogy and context?
2. From the parents' perspective does the Children's Movement Program promote children's development of positive social skills?

### *Outline of thesis*

In Chapter Two of this thesis, the literature concerning the complexity of the child for development will be examined, followed by a more detailed analysis of social development. A brief overview of types and characteristics of community-based programs is also included. The review will then discuss the framework of constructivism and Social Development Theory. The benefits of play on development and movement education are incorporated. Lastly, different teaching methods are examined with a focus

on indirect teaching. The methodology of qualitative research methods will then be explored in Chapter Three with an outline of the methods used to address the research questions of this study. Subsequently, Chapter Four presents the results and findings of the study while highlighting the major themes and insights. Finally in Chapter Five, the findings of the study will be discussed as they relate to previous studies in the field, and in terms of the new information that the results add to our knowledge in this area. Lastly, possibilities of further research avenues in this critical field will be presented.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The chapter provides a review of literature from within the physical education field providing a background for the research study. The review of literature will cover community-based programs, the framework of constructivism and Social Development Theory, play, movement education and different teaching methods.

To provide a foundation for this study, literature has been drawn from many resources in the fields of pedagogy, education, qualitative research design and sociology. The literature covered in this review includes: the whole child approach, community-based programs, the framework of constructivism and Social Development Theory, play as a form of development, the pedagogical approach of movement education. This overview provides a broad description leading into the specifics within this case study.

#### *Complexity of the Child*

Teaching children is a complex task that needs to be approached in a manner that meets all the learners' needs. When creating an appropriate environment and level of challenge for children the aspect of the 'whole child' needs to address and all the different areas of child development need to be incorporated. The "whole child" includes physical, cognitive and affective development which will develop a well-rounded individual, rather than focus on a single area of growth. This study will focus solely on the area of social development as examining all areas of development would be a much larger study. Also, the many anecdotal comments gathered during my previous involvement within the program were based on social interaction and development. Wall and Murray (1994), address the "whole child" to be moving, thinking and feeling,

whereas other authors discuss it as physical, cognitive and affective. Both sets of terms mean the same thing and are aimed at developing a well-rounded individual able to be a competent mover and motivated to participate in physical activity. Furthermore, while movement experiences should consider each domain of the child, the activities should also be considered developmentally appropriate. Developmentally appropriate physical education is the process of teaching students in a progressive manner; beginning with a level one activity and increasing the level of complexity once the previous task has been mastered until a top level activity can be executed. According to Pickup and Price (2007), the goals of developmental physical education should be learning to move and moving to learn and becoming physically literate. Additionally, developmentally appropriate activity should build movement skill acquisition, fitness maintenance and enhancement, cognitive learning, affective growth, social interaction and pro-social behaviour (Gallahue, 1993). A developmentally appropriate program should take into consideration chronological age or grade level, with thought and planning in accordance to ability. When planning for movement progression, an instructor should move from simple to complex and from general to specific as individuals strive to increase their competence in the physical, cognitive and affective domains.

### *The moving child*

The moving child focuses on the acquisition of physical skills. According to Wall and Murray (1994), a primary goal of teaching physical education is to educate children to move. This is termed the psychomotor development of the child. Psychomotor development is divided into physical competency, fitness and skill acquisition which will enable children to be skilful movers (Gallahue, 1993). Physical competency is what

enables individuals to acquire skills more readily; it is the body's ability to respond to the demands of the physical tasks. Skill acquisition refers to the process that occurs when progressing from basic to complex movements. In the elementary years, gross motor activities that require primarily large muscles become proficient leading to the challenge of fine motor skills and specialized skill (Wall & Murray, 1994). Referring to the Revised 2010 Health and Physical Education curriculum, the skills that are identified are stability (static and dynamic balance), locomotion (travelling skills) and manipulation (sending, receiving or retaining objects). Each level of physical competency, fitness and skill acquisition are then further divided into various elements that allow educators to appreciate the fundamentals that are needed to be developed in order to satisfy the moving child. For example, locomotor skills are categorized in the physical domain, and guide children in learning how to transfer their weight. Within the context of teaching and the implications physical development has in the elementary-school years is when children's attention begins to improve, allowing for more complex tasks to be presented and taught. Furthermore, gross and fine motor skills are developed extensively during childhood. Within the elementary-school years, children's motor development becomes much smoother and more coordinated and as they become more confident and defined within their gross motor skill development, they are more venturesome in their movements (Santrock, Woloshyn, Gallagher, Di Petta & Marini, 2004).

### *The thinking child*

Physical education plays a paramount role in cognitive development. One of the objectives of physical education is for children to understand the movement concepts (Gallahue, 1993). These concepts are focused around biomechanical principals and

Laban's analysis. Related to the physical/moving child, this understanding promotes progress in physical skill. The cognitive processes involve changes in an individual's thought, intelligence and language; for example linking together two concepts or ideas or problem-solving in a situation (Santrock & Yussen, 1992). Physical education can promote the thinking/cognitive child in many ways. Through fundamental movement skills children have the opportunity to understand their body and how it creates movement. They also experience different settings such as a gymnasium or an outdoor field, learning to adapt to different equipment and roles and rules during active participation, as well as developing a new movement vocabulary. The expansion of both the thinking and moving provides the child with insight into many new tasks and concepts; expanding their physical activity knowledge and autonomous actions.

#### *The feeling child*

The environment in which a child engages promotes influence on feelings. An important outcome of a quality physical education program is enhancement in the affective domain (Gallahue, 1993). Thereby the goal for educators and instructors is to create a warm and positive setting in which children can take risks without fear of ridicule or lack of support. Teachers and instructors must treat all children as unique individuals, providing opportunities for all students to be successful. Also, to create a positive environment, teachers and instructors can call all students by name, provide positive feedback and provide choice in activity (Wall & Murray, 1994). To help foster an encouraging tone teacher can ensure children are not being singled out for negative reasons. Thus excluding elimination games that focus on punishing children of weaker skill will help to make certain all children have a beneficial experience (Williams, 1994).



Also, promoting positive socialization in a setting leads to fair play, cooperative behaviour and the building of peer relationships (Gallahue, 1993). The affective domain includes elements such as values, motivation, attitudes and feelings. All of these elements are intertwined into the development of social competence and the social child. The social child is one's ability to relate to others and is intrinsically linked to one's emotions, responses and behaviours.

### *The social child*

Social development is a comprehensive term that encompasses a broad array of elements and features (Craig, 2000; Humphrey & Humphrey, 1989). Although there is the realization that children are complex individuals and should be educated in all areas of their development, Humphrey and Humphrey (1989) emphasize the importance of social development, as they consider that most of what children do, they do together. The social needs that a child ought to have are affection which involves acceptance and approval by other people, the need for belonging which involves acceptance and approval of the group and the need for mutuality which involves cooperation, mutual helpfulness and loyalty (Humphrey & Humphrey, 1989).

Current work within social development goes back to the foundations of Jean Piaget and Albert Bandura. Jean Piaget (1954) stressed that children actively construct their own cognitive worlds; information is not just poured into their minds from the environment. Piaget believed there to be two processes that underlie an individual's construction of the world: organization and adaptation. As an individual makes sense of his or her world, organization of experiences occurs. In addition to organization one adapts his or her way of thinking to adapt to the new ideas because additional

information furthers understanding (Santrock & Yuessen, 1992). Piaget believed that individuals adapt in two ways: assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation occurs when children incorporate new information into their existing knowledge and accommodation is when children adjust to new information (Santrock & Yuessen, 1992).

Albert Bandura (1977, 1986, 1989) is one of the main engineers of social learning theory, who believed that cognitive processes are important mediators of environment-behaviour connections. Bandura's research focused heavily on observational learning; learning that occurs through observing what others do. Bandura believed that people cognitively represent the behaviours of others and then sometimes adopt the behaviour themselves. Social learning theorists believe that children acquire a wide range of behaviours, thoughts and feelings through observing others' behaviour and these observations form an important part of children's development (Santrock & Yuessen, 1992).

Although there are many definitions of social development, this research will draw upon the definitions developed by Damon (1983) and Craig (2000) to frame the impending discussion on how physical activity and teaching approaches can impact the child's social development. These authors' definitions are helpful because they divide social development into two important parts: socialization and individualization; both the need for positive socialization with others, as well as the idea of children being active members in their own learning and growth. Craig (2000) states, "[s]ocial development is concerned with the development of social interactions: how they originate, how they change over the lifespan, and how they contribute to individual development" (p. 1).

Socialization is

a process that goes beyond the mere internalization of status, roles and norms in a non-thinking and conforming manner. It is a dynamic, interactive process between society and the individuals- a process that depends on and requires both reasoning and decision-making. (Gallahue & Donnelly, 2003, p. 12)

Further discussion of the socialization process can be described as such: as human beings we learn to be social beings; individuals must learn to participate effectively and efficiently in social groups. Additionally, interaction occurs between the society and social group, therefore the individual learns how to engage in this type of interface (Gallahue & Donnelly, 2003). Therefore, socialization is very much influenced by society and the dominant social groups. Positive social development is linked to culturally accepted norms and can change over time in a society. Social development is important to one's entrance into the social realm (Morris, 1976), which suggests that socialization is a continuous process that occurs throughout one's lifetime. This emphasizes the need for opportunities to develop positive skills associated with social development during the primary years. Humphrey and Humphrey (1989) provide guidelines for social development, since providing a basis for social behaviour for children as they grow and develop allows educators to select and discuss experiences that are likely to foster social development. The guidelines provided are: (1) interpersonal relationships are based on social needs which indicate that all children should be given equal opportunity to participate, (2) a child can develop his or her own self-concept through undertaking roles, (3) there are various degrees of interaction between

individuals and groups, (4) choosing and being chosen, (5) language is a basic means and essential accompaniment of socialization, (6) learning to play roles is a process of social development, (7) interpersonal interaction between children is a basis for choice and (8) a child, in and as a result of belonging to a group, develops differently than he or she can as an individual alone.

One goal an effective physical education program, as well as of all effective teaching is to positively influence the process of children's socialization. Socialization is a learned behaviour that can be modified and improved, especially during childhood (Gallahue & Donnelly, 2003; Morris, 1976). Helping children learn about, experience, and adopt socially appropriate behaviours can help to facilitate valuable social skills

#### *Positive Socialization*

Positive socialization can be broken down into development of social skills and a child being socially competent or have social competence. Social skills have been defined as "children's ability to organize cognitions and behaviours into an integrated course of action directed toward culturally accepted social or interpersonal goals" (Ladd & Mize, 1983); thus social skills refer to social behaviours that are adaptive to, or related to desirable outcomes in specific situations in one's environment. In other words, using appropriate social skills are determined by societal norms. Gallahue (1993) discusses that positive socialization in physical education, recreation or sports settings generally occurs in the form of fair play, cooperative behaviour and good sportpersonship. However, this is not always the case as physical education can also reinforce the competitive nature of physical activity and in turn would not promote the social outcomes that are 'accepted' by the physical education culture. Participation in physical activities typically occur in

social settings requiring children to make decisions about both cooperative and competitive behaviour thereby indicating that physical activity has a tremendous potential to foster positive behaviour and teach the virtues of honesty, teamwork, self-control and fair play.

Social competence may be defined as a dynamic, changing social judgement regarding a child's social skills in a given situation. This suggests that a child's behaviour in a specific situation shows a certain degree or level of competence ranging from being socially competent to incompetent (King & Kirschenbaum, 1992). Determining which specific social skills are considered positive or acceptable would not be universal, as cultural differences, diverse settings and opinions all contribute to what is deemed 'appropriate'. However, Cartledge and Milburn (1986), identify nine areas for social skill instruction that contribute to positive peer relations: smiling/laughing, greeting others, joining ongoing activities, extending invitations, conversational skills, sharing and cooperation, verbal complementing and physical grooming. Hall, Jones and Claxton (2008), who created a social skills program for kindergarten children, identified pro-social behaviours in 4 categories: survival skills (e.g. listening, following directions, using nice talk), interpersonal skills (e.g. waiting your turn, how to interrupt), problem-solving skills (e.g. asking for help, ignoring), and conflict resolution skills (e.g. dealing with teasing, dealing with losing, accepting consequences). The development of social skills in the early years improves existing behaviours and decreases the likelihood of future difficulties. Smart and Sanson (2003) when discussing social competence identify the following as examples of socially appropriate behaviour sharing, helping,

cooperating, initiating relationships, sensitively interacting with others, and handling conflict situations well.

### *Benefits of Play for Development*

Play is a valuable avenue toward positive child development. Play is essential to development because it contributes to the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being of children and youth (Ginsburg, 2007). Recognizing the importance of play to optimal child development, the United Nations High Commission has recognized it as a fundamental Human Right for every child (Ginsburg, 2007). Play allows children to use their creativity while developing their imagination, critical elements of their physical, cognitive and emotional strength, as well as allowing children to become more aware of the demands of their world. The engagement and interaction with others in a child's world can be fostered through the activities associated with play as they attempt to master the world around them. Play also helps children develop new competencies that lead to enhanced confidence and the resiliency they will need to face future challenges (Ginsburg, 2007).

Vickerius and Sandberg (2006) discuss that the ecology of human development is significant to play because play is an activity where the child is active and fosters the creation of relationships with other people and develops the child's language, thoughts and feelings; within these relationships the child learns and view diverse kinds of roles which transfer into play. It is through play that children are able to learn about the adult world within a context suitable for their age and ability. Bergen and Fromberg (2009) indicate that play is important to the optimal development of children during their middle childhood years and although there is an abundance of research evidence showing that

play supports young children's development, it has often been ignored or addressed minimally. Play can be defined as intrinsically motivated, essentially an activity in which the process is more important than the product; free from externally imposed rules; filled with positive affect and characterized by a non-literal pretense (Fein & Rivki, 1986).

Moreover, play during childhood can be understood as enjoyable work but also can be defined as the most efficient way by which a child learns about the environment. Play can be pleasurable, captivating and sometimes maddening for a child. It is through play that a child learns self-perception and how the world relates to the individual (Mitchell, 1980).

Moreover, when young adults were asked to reminisce about their childhood play experiences, many believed that their middle childhood play helped them learn "social skills," "hobbies," and often "career decisions" that influences their later adults experiences (Bergen & Fromber, 2009).

The element of play can be divided into a progression of stages that a child will pass through comparable to their personal growth: non-social activity, parallel play, associative play and cooperative play.

A non-social activity is when children watch others play or engage in their own solitary play and largely ignore what others are doing (Shaffer, Wood & Willoughby, 2005). Mitchell refers to non-social activity as solitary play and further defines it as play involving no other people (Mitchell, 1980). Infants play alone and often with their guardians, while they have an eager interest in their peers, young children's ability to sustain social play in the absence of a supportive older child or adult is noticeably limited during the first and second years of life. Continual peer play begins to emerge at two years of age and by age four children further engage in imaginary play and begin to

play elaborate pretend games. Research indicates that even when potential partners are present, play is likely to be solitary in children of two years of age (Fein & Rivin, 1986).

Parallel play is defined as when children play side by side but interact very little and do not try to influence the behaviour of other players (Shaffer, Wood & Willoughby, 2005). Shaffer (1984) further supports the concept of parallel play and defines it as involving the engagement of children with the same set of toys but with no form of interaction other than occasional glances at the peer. We can loosely categorize parallel play as being social, but only due to the close proximity of the children in the play environment. The behaviour of one child has minimal impact on the behaviour of another (Sheppard & Willoughby, 1975).

Associative plays is how children share toys and exchange materials, but pursue their own agendas and do not cooperate to achieve shared goals (Shaffer, Wood & Willoughby, 2005). Furthermore, within associative play children will look towards peers, imitate play, comment on actions directed at peers and watching play (Broadhead, 2005).

Parten (1932) found that associative and cooperative activity are ones involving much interaction with peers that increases with age. Cooperative play is defined as when children now act out make-believe themes, assume reciprocal roles and collaborate to achieve shared goals (Shaffer, Wood & Willoughby, 2005). Mitchell (1980) explains that cooperative play does not develop until after toddlerhood; which suggests games requiring full cooperation are doomed to fail during the stage of toddlerhood. Cooperative play also includes the concept of pretend play; the make-



believe and imaginary aspects of play. Corsaro and Tomlinson (1980) believe that this play can be observed as the continual practice of reality and it is the children's view of their social world that becomes available through the analysis of the basic communication patterns and interpretive techniques exhibited throughout this type of play.

Pretend play reflects a child's symbolic abilities and provides the opportunity for these abilities to be practiced and extended. A major aspect of children's play development involved the ability to substitute one object for another, for example to treat a piece of wood as if it were a telephone or sandwich (Fein & Rivin, 1986). The opportunity to engage in make-believe enhances many of the language skills valued in school. Moreover, the pretend play provides a natural instance for talking about thoughts and feelings. Vygotsky (1978) provided particular focus and analysis on the progress of object presence during the preschool years. Vygotsky believed that prior to pretend/imaginative play, a child's understanding of meaning is visually mediated; denoting the perception of an object predominates over its meaning and therefore determines a child's action (Fein & Rivin, 1968). Corresponding to Vygotsky's view, the emergence of pretend play profoundly alters this relationship and the fields of meanings other than those immediately derived (Fein & Rivin, 1968).

More technically, play is the kind of system that allows easy interference in its own structural character, recalling that animals also play and that we see play as a very primitive and ancient form of expression and communication. It is also like a language because it brings individuals into a community of mutual expression (Fein & Rivin, 1986).

Vickerius and Sandberg (2006) discuss the influence of play in *The significance of play and the environment around play*, illuminating that play has its significance because it is fun for children. Children in the study indicated that the most enjoyable thing in school are play and to be creative, since the most boring thing to do is something they do not want to do or when they do not play with other children. In the interaction between children the participants indicated the significance of play was to make friends. Friends are important for children and they become conscious of themselves through others. In play children become aware of themselves, the society and the group the child belongs to which contributes to the foundation of the child's morals and personality. This interaction with others is where children learn about taking different roles and contribute to the foundation for children's development.

Niland (2009) discusses the value of a play-based and child-centered environment in early childhood music education. The author notes that music education for young children is often teacher-led and structured toward specific behavioral outcomes. However, research demonstrated the use of child-centered musical play as a medium for young children's exploration of musical elements and concepts. When children play, they commonly imitate the behavior of others and then use their own ideas to develop their play further. This is one of the reasons why play is seen as being central to children's learning. Observation of young children's free musical play has shown considerable evidence of skill development through exploration. In adopting a play-based, child-centered approach to early childhood music education, the author indicated there may not be a change in the fundamental aspects of the program, but a change in the way the educators approach children with them.

*Inclusion: Special Needs/Disabilities*

An all inclusive environment is one that allows children of all levels of development to participate fully. Children with special needs or a different type of disability need a place to develop and make social contacts, similar to their able-bodied peers. While there are many valuable programs offered solely for those with special needs, an integrated program has many benefits as well. In particular children with Autism face enormous struggles when attempting to interact with their typically developing peers (Harper, Symon & Frea, 2007). Viewing a playground during recess at a primary school, one would anticipate seeing children pretending to be their favourite superhero, children playing basketball, sharing playground equipment, chasing after each other in a game of tag or requesting a turn in order to engage with his or her peers, all which encourage communication and social skill development. All of these components are connected to play and allow for social skill development to occur as it naturally happens during play in typically developing children (Harper, Symon & Frea, 2007). On the contrary, for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), the acquisition of social skills does not naturally transpire (Harper, Symon & Frea, 2007). However, there has been research done to show that with direct support and a typical routine, many children with autism can learn important social skills to improve their peer actions and with the shift toward more inclusive opportunities there has been an increase in the use of peer-mediated strategies to facilitate and encourage social interactions (Harper, Symon & Frea, 2007). The aim of using peers as individuals to assist with social participation is to do so in a naturalistic setting to avoid children with ASD from isolating themselves (Strain & Kohler, 1998). Harper, Symon & Frea (2007) also indicate that the interaction

and variety of techniques learned by the peers of children with ASD has increased the social skills of the targeted children and also the quality of interaction between them and their non-disabled peers. Additionally, while the primary goal of education is to learn concepts and skills, the goal of an activity centered community-based program is the development of movement skills; social skills are necessary to achieve a productive place in a community, and when looking back at one's primary years, perhaps the greatest moments are those that were made and shared playing with friends (Harper, Symon & Frea, 2007).

#### *Community-based programs*

The Children's Movement Program is categorized as a community-based program, while there is not a unified definition of what this means there are many program options to enroll a child in within the community setting, all diverse in purpose, skill and setting. Some of the program options available are sports-specific activity such as a hockey, baseball or soccer league. There is also the option of such things as ice skating, dancing and gymnastics. All of the above activity selections are competitive in nature, skill-specific and are often taken with the desire to become the best. There are also other organizations that provide a general activity program but with the purpose of providing a fun experience for the participants, lacking the intent of learning and challenging the participants at a suitable level.

Many researchers have defined the characteristics that are needed to create such a program. Wright (2007), who conducted research on a community-based after-school art based program, indicated that it was important for the organization to have a concentration on youth development with a focus on building individual and community

assets and strengths. Additionally, Wright (2007) emphasizes that funding for the program needs to include core funding and not short-term grants for sustainability. Moreover, staff should be knowledgeable about youth development, possess relevant training and education. The actual program should be physically and psychologically safe, encourage parental involvement, and collaborate with local community organizations. These recommendations are based upon the responses of managers of art organizations of Canada and the United States with structure of the Hulett's (1977) Logic Model framework. The logic model is a useful tool for designing, managing and evaluating programs aiming to produce positive changes in youth. Wright (2007) also discusses a framework for the content of the activities; the focus should be on skill-development activities, be on-going as opposed to short term, be age-appropriate, diverse and be tailored to the specific needs of the participants.

Perkins and Moan (2007) discuss the characteristics of sports-based youth development programs, which are community-based. The term "sports-based youth development programs" are "out-of-school-time programs that use a particular sport [. . .] to facilitate learning and life skill development in youth" (p.75). Perkins and Moan (2007) state that the appropriate structure for this setting includes clear communication, developmentally appropriate flow and pace of sessions, and clear-cut rules and expectations. The staff and volunteers explain activities clearly, while they are developmentally appropriate and the participants have enough time to engage and learn the skills without becoming bored or disengaged.

### *Constructivism and Social Development Theory*

The theory of constructivism focuses on how individuals generate meaning and knowledge from their experiences. Shor (1992) defines constructivism as a way of building knowledge about self, school, everyday experience, and society through reflection and meaning-making, thereby casting individuals as active members of their own learning. Furthermore, constructivism can be viewed in a social framework (social constructivism) as a means of analytical approach that demonstrates how social relations are a product of the ideas, values and norms that people use to shape the world they live in. The term social constructivism can find its beginning in John Dewey's *Pedagogical Creed* (1963), in which Dewey emphasizes his view that educational development is a result of the empowerment of the learner in a social setting (St. Pierre Hirtle, 1996). Dewey believed that school is where one is within a community, which can help learners construct knowledge socially so they can fully participate in the "social consciousness of the race" (Dewey, 1963 as cited in St. Pierre Hirtle, 1996).

A constructivist approach to education would concentrate on the underlying themes embedded in the learning process. This means that content needs to be presented in such a way that the children can form their own thoughts based on critical thinking rather than the assumptions previously established by societal norms. According to Glesne (2006) "constructivists hold the knowledge that of the world is not a simple reflection of what there is, but a set of social artifacts of what we make of is there" (p. 6); there are various constructivist theories that differ in focus and approach to how such learning takes place.

Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) was a social constructivist who structured a theory around child pedagogy to emphasize that children actively construct their knowledge. Vygotsky's theory holds a social constructivist viewpoint that emphasizes the social context of learning (Santrock, et al., 2004). Vygotsky's work remained unknown in North American until the 1960's when the information was translated from Russian to English. However, in the last several decades, psychologists and educators have increased their use and review of Vygotsky's views (Santrock & Yussen, 1992).

Vygotsky's theory is termed the Social Development Theory and revolves around the theoretical conjecture that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. The theory posits that social interaction precedes development; and that consciousness and cognition are the end product of socialization and social behaviour (Crain, 1992). Vygotsky suggests that every function in the child's development appears twice: first, on the social level, second on the individual level and first between people (interpsychological), then inside the child (intrapsychological) (Shute & Slee, 2003). A further aspect of Vygotsky's theory is the 'zone for proximal development' (ZPD), which suggests that there is a level of development attained when children engage in social behaviour. The range of skill that can be developed with adult guidance or peer collaboration exceeds what can be attained alone (Slee & Shute, 2003; Santrock & Yussen, 1992). The ZPD describes a range of tasks that are too difficult for children to master alone but that can be learned with guidance and assistance from adults or more skilled children. Closely linked to the ZPD is the notion of scaffolding, which provides a changing of level of support and difficulty in a task presented (Santrock et al., 2004). Vygotsky's view on education is that it plays a central role and helps children

learn the tools of the culture. This view places the teacher as the facilitator and guide, not the director, and in the process establishes many opportunities for students to learn alongside the teacher and more skilled peers.

Davydov and Kerr (1995) indicate within their discussion of Vygotsky's influence of education that the most valuable methods for organizing approaches to teaching, students learning and upbringing is the need for collecting facts and observations to their developmental and individual particularities, and as a result, these methods cannot be uniform. Furthermore,

“from Vygotsky's point of view, the main figure in this collaboration is the child him or herself as an authentic subject. The adult, either the teacher or the upbringer, using the possibilities of the social milieu in which the child lives, can only direct and guide the child's personal activity with the intent of encouraging its further development” (Davydov & Kerr, 1995, p.17).

Vygotsky's theory is not without criticism. For instance, when utilized, the educational philosophy should be attentive to the amount of instruction and assistance given to the students. “Developmentalists have repeatedly warned that when we give children assistance and direction, we encourage them to depend on others to know what and how to think, undermining their ability to think for themselves” (Crain, 1992, p. 219).

However, Vygotsky usually recommended that we only provide children with slight amounts of assistance, such as leading questions or the first step to a solution (Crain, 1992); thereby supporting the basis of movement education and a guided discovery teaching approach which will be addressed in later stages of this research.



### *Movement Education*

The concept of movement education was first developed in the post World War II era in England as female teachers replaced their male counterparts (Lathrop & Francis, 2010). It brought an innovative approach to provide learning experiences for children that were transferred over into North America in the 1950s due to exchanges between English and North American institutions (Wall & Barnes, 1981). Inherent in the presentation of movement education is the non-competitive and informal atmosphere, the emphasis on individuality, responsibility and success, the use of equipment which leads to more involvement of children and the self-discipline that ensues. Additionally included in movement education is the problem-solving aspect, where the problem is posed and the child must bring his or her cognitive and movement ability to create an answer, but the answer is within the child's capabilities (Evans, 1979).

### *Conceptualized content*

The introduction of the philosophy of movement education was an alternative to the traditional approach to physical education that was being implemented at the time. Movement education is based upon the premise that focuses on the needs of every child, featuring tasks, problem solving and a variety of teaching methods. In some instances the indirect method as opposed to the direct or command style of instruction allows for the needs of every child to be met, as well as the opportunity to explore physical education themes for development and diverse movement experiences (Hill, 1979). Additionally, contradictory to the traditional role of the teacher, the instructor serves as a facilitator in the learning process, thereby providing challenges and giving verbal support to the children (Wall & Barnes, 1981). However, there are situations where the direct teaching

method is more suitable, for example when providing safety knowledge about the equipment. Hill (1979) indicates that the main change in the program [movement education] involved a new content in the learning of motor skills and a new role for the teacher which threw the responsibility of learning to the student with the teacher as a motivator and guide. The movement education approach provided the teaching tactic of an appropriate style for the situation. A more in-depth look at direct and in-direct teaching styles will be addressed in the next section.

Within the context of the movement education atmosphere the teacher facilitates the opportunity for children to view various movement patterns by having members of the class demonstrate different ideas, skills and responses to the challenges set (Wall & Barnes, 1981). This allows children to view competence and ideas at a developmentally appropriate age level; rather than previewing an adult with the goal of attaining a mini-adult version. Carefully worded questions are asked by the teacher to help the children focus on a specific aspect of a skill. As well, the teacher builds a vocabulary of teaching cues, all of which provide the children with pertinent information that they can use to improve their performance. This kind of interaction between teacher and children results in the attainment of a supportive learning environment, one in which success is seen more often than failure, where children are not afraid to try something new (Wall & Barnes, 1981). The environment in which a child fosters and explores movement is critical to the development of confidence to explore new and challenging ideas. The environment must provide the opportunity to meet every child's needs at a rate appropriate for him or her; as 'the approach used in movement education allows for the physical and intellectual differences in children' (Kirchner, Cunningham & Warrell, 1978, p. 5), thereby offering

an opening and encouragement for the success of each learner. Additionally, creativity rather than competition is a key foundation to this approach and is largely based on principles derived from constructivism and is designed to integrate movement with social and thinking process (Rovegno & Dolly, 2006).

The foundation of movement education can be seen in the work of Rudolph Laban (1958). His introduction of concepts of time, space, effort and relationships provided a new meaning to the definition and study of human movement, thereby providing a diverse approach within the physical education classroom (Stainford, 1979). It is this focus on movement themes rather than isolated skills that offers the range of skill allowing each individual child to create a movement response that is both individual and triumphant. For example, a specific outcome for grade 2 within the Revised 2010 Health and Physical Education curriculum is “perform a variety of static balances with and without equipment, using different body parts at different levels and making different body shapes” (B1.1). These instructions do not instruct the entire class to perform the exact same skill, but use an approach that they feel confident in to create a balance. A student may choose to use 3 bases of support at a low level, whereas a more skilled student may choose 1 base of support at a high level, but ultimately each response leads to achievement of the task successfully.

As stated by Wall and Barnes (1981), movement education focuses on an integrated approach to learning rather than the teaching of independent skill mastery and content. Units and lessons are structured around such themes as body awareness, space awareness, relationships or effort (Stanley, 1969), which are the foundations of Laban’s movement themes. Advocates of this curriculum would probably not teach regulation

volleyball or basketball, but would rather organize games around themes designed to develop skills basic to many sports (Thomas, Lee & Thomas, 1988). Support for the induction of a movement education approach to teaching, as stated by Wall and Murray (1994), suggests that the use of Laban's concepts for content, integrated within appropriate teaching styles as a means of creating a positive learning environment to meet all children's needs, results in a much more effective physical education program. Kulinna (2008) explores models for curriculum and pedagogy in elementary school physical education, and categorizes movement education as a model for individual and social development. Concepts of human movement, as previously mentioned: effort, space, body and relationships, serve as the basis for the curriculum approach, which is commonly divided into creative dance, educational gymnastics and developmental games. Children apply concepts such as directions and pathways, and using weight into movement skills such as sending and receiving which can then later be extended and refined into other elements. Rovegno and Dolly (2006) explain that movement education is based on the theory that by mastering the key concepts of fundamental human movement, individuals will be prepared to explore and succeed in other movement formats such as sport form or fitness activity. While studies have looked at student outcomes from the movement education model (Harper, Symon & Frea, 2007), however Chen and Rovegno (2000) found that elementary students who participated in movement education programs developed critical thinking skills and ideas of creative movement. Chen and Rovegno (2000) discuss how teachers work as facilitators to guide students to learn how to work with peers and consider others needs, be sensitive to others feelings,

express their own ideas and reasons, discuss questions with other cooperatively and guide students to share ideas about a variety of movement tasks.

#### *Equipment/apparatus/ stimuli*

Movement education programs have the dual purpose of helping skilled children expand their abilities while providing opportunities for lesser skilled children to develop their skills. Inherent in the presentation of movement education is the non-competitive and informal atmosphere with the emphasis on individuality, responsibility and success, the use of equipment which leads to more involvement of children and the self-discipline that develops (Evans, 1979). Movement education also focuses on the problem-solving aspect, where the problem is posed and the child must bring his cognitive and movement ability to create an answer, but the answer is within the child's capabilities (Evans, 1979). For example, rather than asking the whole class to perform a head stand, the movement challenge posed is about weight bearing. In movement education there is always the opportunity for choice with the movement challenge given. Children have the opportunity to progress through the movement themes suitable for their stage of development. Apparatus and equipment allow for further progression, however with the option of small and large apparatus to provide appropriate stages of advancement. For example, in educational gymnastics apparatus is not viewed as equipment upon which specific stunts or vaults are performed, instead it is viewed as when fitting and applicable to the movement theme increases the challenge for the learner (Wilson, 1979).

#### *Teaching Styles*

Muska Mosston in 1966 wrote a seminal text entitled *Teaching Physical Education*. The author suggests that children and youth should be treated with respect, as

rationale beings capable of gaining the ability to formulate decisions for themselves. He states that by artfully manipulating the quality of decisions we ask people, and by increasing the complexity of the situations in which we place them, their powers of cognition will likewise improve (Mosston, 1966). Introducing physical educators to a diversity of teaching methods came a plethora of people that addressed pedagogy such as Judy Rink (2002), Kate Barrett (1984), Mike Metzler (2000). There is a spectrum of teaching styles that need to be considered and chosen as the appropriate teaching method for the situation. Although there is a tremendous range of teaching styles the following will focus on the most common (Kirk et al, 2006; Byra, 2006).

Research surrounding teaching styles to support social and cognitive domains can be traced back to the short time of approximately ten years (Kirk et al., 2006), which partially explains why direct teaching methods and instruction focused on physical performance are still the core of physical education (Rink, 2002). Research in physical education supports the notion that direct teaching styles are effective in promoting student motor learning and when teachers utilize the characteristics of direct (teacher-centered) instruction there is significant student achievement in skill performance (Kirk et al., 2006). However, physical education is not a subject area with the possibility of solely fostering development in the physical/psychomotor domain. Physical educators and researchers indicate that those cognitive and social learning outcomes contribute as much, if not more to student learning in physical education compared to psychomotor development (Kirk et al., 2006). This emphasizes the need for different teaching approaches/styles that have dual or tri-emphasis such as guided discovery, cooperative learning and peer teaching styles (Kirk et al., 2006). The opportunity to develop different

domains, physical, cognitive and affective, through physical education requires physical educators to implement student-centered teaching styles within their classrooms.

### *Direct Instruction*

Direct teaching implies a highly structured, teacher-centered and controlled instructional environment (Kirk et al., 2006). Rink (2006) defines direct teaching as “the teacher teaches in small steps; gives explicit directions or instructions on what the student is to do; maintains a task-orientated, teacher-monitored environment with high student engagement with content; and provides immediate feedback to students (p. 452). Moreover, Mosston and Ashworth (2002) approach direct teaching through numerous definitions to encompass many characteristics in the teaching style, all implying that the style is a teacher-controlled approach placing the teacher in the center of control providing explanation, demonstration and practice. Additionally, Pangrazi (1991) provides insight on the characteristics that illustrate direct teaching methods: the amount of time devoted to each is determined by the instructor; evaluation is usually accomplished by the instructor, who has certain present standards for student performance and children are guided along almost identical paths towards similar goals. Concluding that direct teaching is highly teacher-centered and does not provide options or different modes of teaching for various learning styles and needs indicates that it may not always be the best method to employ for the learning environment. Direct teaching is commonly employed in physical education settings due to the nature and benefits of teaching motor skills in accordance with precise instruction. However, the direct teaching style is one-dimensional thereby assuming that the subject matter being taught has only one important goal: thus the only important goal in teaching physical education is to

increase motor skill achievement, and that all students learn in the same way and should be taught in an identical approach (Peterson, 1979, p. 66 as cited in Kirk et al., 2006). However, physical education has the ability to be multidimensional with a focus on outcomes associated with the psychomotor, cognitive and affective domains of learning, which requires the implementation and options of various teaching styles (Kirk et al., 2006). The continued focus on sports as the main source of activity within physical education should be rethought; there is a need for physical education specialists that are knowledgeable to employ these innovative teaching methods and approach teaching with a movement education outlook including the importance of the development of the whole child.

Furthermore, connected back to Vygotsky's Social Development Theory, Vygotsky's foundations of the reform of Russian education and understanding this law of Social Development Theory "has special significance because, working from it, we can confidently overcome the authoritarian pedagogy that until recent times ruled in our educational system and that ignored the possibility of a child's carrying out personal or individual activity" (Davydov & Kerr, 1995, p.17). Vygotsky's theory assists in making sense of the need to free from direct teaching in order to employ a method that allows children take an active role in constructing their own knowledge.

### *Indirect Teaching*

The method of indirect teaching offers many benefits to the students engaged; it provides a different type of instruction which allows students to be more involved in their own learning. Indirect instruction includes methods which allow and encourage more student participation in the direction and involvement of the activities; this type of



instruction allows less lecturing and more questioning, as well as more positive reinforcement for students (McCaleb, 1981). Additionally, the activities are more interactive and student-centered and the teacher facilitates a process of learning where the students are encouraged to activate their own logic, reasoning and problem solving skills. Moreover, some of the objectives of indirect teaching styles are to have students become sufficiently emotionally, cognitively and socially secure to move beyond memory to risk producing alternative ideas to the instructions provided (Mosston & Ashworth, 2002). Shor (1992) discusses the elements of the ‘participating classroom’, referring to the indirect teaching approach, as opposed to the “competitive classroom”, which she describes as the teacher-centered, authoritarian traditional curriculum that can interfere with the positive feelings many students need to learn. The authoritarian traditional curriculum can produce a competitive orientation that leads to isolation and alienation among students only encouraging a handful of ‘winners’. Conversely, the participating classroom, or indirect approach, provides mutual authority and some of the positive affects which support student learning are cooperativeness, curiosity, humour, responsibility, respect, attentiveness and hope (Shor, 1992). The next section outlines a few options for teaching strategies which are encompassed in the in-direct approach to teaching.

### *Guided Discovery*

Mosston and Ashworth (2002) define the characteristics of “the Guided Discovery style of teaching as a logical and sequential design of questions that lead a person to discover a predetermined response” (p. 212). The role of the teacher is to make all subject matter decisions, including the target concept to be discovered and the order of the

questions for the learner. The role of the learner is to discover the answers, implying that the learner is active in the process of the discovery of knowledge making decisions within the predetermined subject material (Mosston & Ashworth, 2002). The discovery styles of teaching have been found to promote cognitive and social learning in physical education settings (Kirk et al., 2006) and so connecting back to Vygotsky's Theory of Social Development,

it is clear to us why Vygotsky's general ideas could not be used for such a long time in the education system of a totalitarian society [because] they simply contradict all of its principles. And at the same time, it becomes understandable why these ideas, which have become more concrete in contemporary theories, are so necessary for us as we create an educational system oriented toward democratic and humanistic principles. (Davydov & Kerr, 1995, p.13)

Byra (2006), through the review of various teaching styles, summarizes that the direct teaching style remains prominent in teaching approaches and research in physical education. There is the knowledge to indicate that physical education can be a vehicle to support each area, physical, cognitive and affective, of the child's development, yet many physical educators still stay consistent with the historical approach to teaching.

#### *Self-check*

Self-check is a teaching style that fosters engagement in a task followed by self-assessment. The teacher develops the content, criteria and logistical decisions, but the learners work independently to check their own progress and performance against the criteria first provided by the teacher (Mosston and Ashworth, 2002). This style of teaching is highly student-centered as it creates independence and motivation in students

while giving the added responsibility of decision-making and checking performance. This is a major shift away from direct styles of teaching because it focuses on having students assume the responsibility for their learning and learning outcomes.

### *Peer-Teaching*

Kirk et al. (2006) discuss that this teaching style includes students working in pairs supporting each other's learning. Additionally, Mosston and Ashworth (2002) examine this teaching style, but refer to it as the Reciprocal Style. The characteristics that define this style are: social interactions, reciprocation and giving feedback that is guided by specific criteria. The role of the teacher is to provide subject matter and criteria to the observer. Both learners work in the partnership to achieve the goal. One learner is the doer who performs the task while the other learner is the observer who provides immediate feedback to the doer using the information provided by the teacher. At the end of this first practice session; the doer and the observer change places. This teaching style has been shown to be effective in promoting student cognition and social interaction (Byrd, 1990). This teaching style is structured to expand socialization and interaction in schools due to the interactive nature of the approach; students rely on each other for feedback and to complete the allotted task.

These alternative approaches to teaching shift the focus from a teacher-centered instruction and provide a child/learner-centered tactic. These other methods: guided discovery, peer-teaching and self-check, allow children to be intrinsically motivated, as well as provide opportunities for individual success. Moreover the structure of these diverse approaches enhances the time of interaction with peers and opportunity for social

development; individual motivation and responsibility, as well as the opportunity to have a positive and successful experience within the physical education environment.

However, after examination of other teaching styles contrary to direct teaching, and with the numerous benefits these diverse approaches have to offer; why is it that direct teaching remains the most popular style in the classroom? Cothran and Kulianna (2008) indicate that despite the abundance of knowledge about various teaching models, there is a very heavy reliance on direct instruction. Teachers' decisions about model use depend on the factors of control, time, and knowledge (Cothran and Kulianna, 2008). Teachers' discuss that it is difficult to implement indirect teaching styles and still have control over the class; direct instruction has all the students doing the same thing at the same time, thereby allowing tighter control over the group. With peer and self-check teaching styles the teachers are concerned with students getting off-task or becoming restless; this approach increases the time and need to monitor the learners. Additionally, due to time restraints to teach and include all aspects of the curriculum; many teachers worried that models other than direct instruction were not as efficient (Cothran & Kulianna, 2008); the alternative models allow children to spend a preferred amount of time on a task until a stage of satisfactory, while direct instruction allows the teacher to move quickly through the whole lesson in a pre-determined amount of time. Lastly, knowledge is an area of concern when straying from a direct approach. One teacher stated "Well, I want to know that they're learning the right thing so if I rely on peers to teach it sometimes they might not be learning proper usage. With direct instruction I know that what they're hearing from me and what I'm showing them is the correct method" (Cothran & Kulianna, 2008, p.129). However, that is why the teacher provides

in the initial stages of the lesson criteria and content that the students use to gauge their feedback and need for improvement. Furthermore, the idea of knowledge can also refer to the instructors' lack of knowledge in implementing these types of alternative methods. Cothran and Kulianna (2008) discuss that there is some evidence that more experienced physical education teachers' knowledge varies from that of novices and those experiences may allow for more effective teaching (Chen & Rovegno, 2000); thereby, indicating that teachers need to increase their knowledge and become more up to date with current information and teaching approaches. Consequently, criticisms of indirect teaching methods seem to have more to do with their implementation than the approaches themselves.

### *Summary*

It is clear that children's play is critical for positive child development and many community based-programs exist that have been formed to facilitate this. However, the focus has been largely on community-based programs which are sport-specific. More specifically, when reviewing the programs directly focused on developing social competence, the programs have served as an intervention for children who are already display behavioural issues. The Children's Movement Program being based on movement education provides a diverse environment and framework for a community-based program, which currently remains unknown. Also, the developmental outcomes of the program are linked to engagement rather than a specialized intervention. Furthermore, movement education has been explored mainly in relation to the education field, with the primary setting being a formal classroom/gymnasium. Additionally, the research of the type of teaching style used to facilitate learning has also remained principally in the

educational setting, whereas the importance of teaching styles in a community program remains largely unexplored.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter will discuss the methodology and the methods used to conduct this research which focuses upon the philosophy behind the research design as well as the steps taken to gather the data.

#### METHODOLOGY

##### *Qualitative Research*

The term ‘methodology’ refers to the philosophy underpinning the research. This research is qualitative in nature, which is an umbrella category that refers to several research approaches and traditions that share certain commonalities. There is an emphasis on process or how things happen and a focus on attitudes, beliefs and thoughts; how people make sense of their experiences as they interpret the world (Baumgartner, Strong & Hensley, 2002). Qualitative strategies allow the researcher to record and understand individuals on their own terms. Furthermore, research questions are not framed by defined variables or testing hypotheses, but most often come from real-world observations, problems and questions (Baumgartner, Strong & Hensley, 2002). Qualitative methods will be used for data collection and analysis within this study. More specifically, the paradigms of interpretivism and social interactionism form the framework for this research.

##### *Interpretive Paradigm*

“A paradigm is a comprehensive belief system, worldview or framework that guides research and practice in a field,” (Willis, 2007, p. 8). This study is based upon the interpretive paradigm. Interpretive studies gather and analyze thick data sources, they use

the descriptive data to “develop conceptual categories or to illustrate, support, or challenge theoretical assumptions held prior to the data gathering” (Merriam, 1988, p. 28). Researchers that hold to the interpretive paradigm view the social world as dissimilar to that of the positivist, which is the other end of the paradigm continuum. Research gathered within the interpretive paradigm focuses on social relationships, as well as the mechanisms and processes through which members in a setting navigate and construct their social worlds (Bailey, 2007). Furthermore, an interpretive researcher seeks interest in meanings, symbols, beliefs, events, activities, and others by participating in the setting where the research is taking place. There is a vast level of importance placed on the socially significant meanings within the social world (Bailey, 2007). This paradigm has assisted in providing a framework with a case study approach to explore the relationship between community-based programs and social development. Moreover, the study will be based on inductive reasoning. Induction is when thinking proceeds from the specific to general. Conclusions about events are based on information generated through many individual and direct observations (Baumgartner, Strong & Hensley, 2002).

### *Symbolic Interactionism*

Symbolic Interactionism is the overarching methodological approach that has been used in this research. According to Hewitt (2000) symbolic interactionism is a theory which helps to illuminate how human beings define their experiences and give meaning to their identities, behaviours, realities, and social interactions. To understand behaviour, we must understand already created definitions and the process by which they are manufactured. Human beings are actively engaged in creating their world; understanding the intersection of biography and society is essential. People act, not on the



basis of predetermined objects, but rather as interpreting, defining, symbolic beings whose behaviour can only be understood by having the researcher enter into the defining process through such methods as participant observation (Bogdan & Bilken, 1982). Furthermore, interpretation is not an autonomous act; individuals interpret with the help of others and it is through interaction the individual constructs meaning. People in a given situation often develop common definitions of shared perspectives, however this is not always the case as means is always subject to negotiation. This methodology seeks to examine the meanings associated with individual's experiences in relation to their self-identity as created by and based on interactions with others (Hewitt, 2000; Coakley, 2001).

Symbolic Interaction does not ignore that there are rules and regulations, norms and beliefs in society; however it suggests that they are important in understanding behaviour if people take these preconceived ideas into account. However, it is not the predetermined rules and norms that are crucial in understanding behaviour, but how they are defined and used in situations. Another part of symbolic interaction is the construct of one's self, the definition that people create through interacting with others of who they are. As human beings, we come to see ourselves in part as other see us; therefore one's self is also a social construction through the process of interaction (Bogdan & Bilken, 1982).

### *Case study*

A popular qualitative research method is a case study which is described as “an examination of a specific phenomenon such as a program, an event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group” (Merriam, 1988, p.9). Moreover, case study research

means conducting an empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its natural context using multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2003). The topics of case study research vary widely; case study itself is a broad term and many have defined numerous individual types (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Merriam, 1988). Consequently, the special cases or categories usually overlap, and very few cases are actually instances of pure categories. Another way to look at case studies are based on the way that data is utilized (Willis, 2007). This study will be based on an interpretative case. The purpose of using the interpretive case study is to focus on understanding the particulars of a specific situation, setting, organization, culture or individual, but also that the local understanding may be interconnected to existing theories or models (Willis, 2007).

The case study approach was used to investigate the effect the Children's Movement Program has upon the children's social development. An interpretive case study allowed the collections and analysis of thick data through participant observations, field notes and interviews.

### *Credibility*

Critical to credible research is prolonged engagement (Guba & Lincoln, 1995). My history with the Children's Movement Program extends back to 2004. I was present for the planning and training stages of the program as well as after the completion of the program when conducting the interview. I was therefore immersed in the field for a total of six years; five years as a coordinator and one as a researcher.

### *Triangulation*

Triangulation is the process of cross validation among researchers, research methods, and data sources (Baumgartner, Strong & Hensley, 2002). Crosschecking

against different methods such as observations, interviews and data sources contributes greatly to the study's trustworthiness. Flaws in one method can often be overcome by using a different method, but by cross-checking events, processes for which data is underprovided can be clarified (Baumgartner, Strong & Hensley, 2002). In this study, participant observations were checked against field notes, interviews and observations. The field notes were used as a source of data prior to conducting interviews, as well as when writing the findings. The field notes provided a framework for more specific details within the questioning. The field notes also provided a context when writing the results and another source to check against when analysing the interview transcripts. Triangulation methods help to ensure that the researcher has not only studied a fraction of the complexity that is being explored to understand (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

#### *Trustworthiness/Quality*

Most field researchers concern themselves with the term validity; however a term that parallels validity is trustworthiness, usually for those who use an interpretive paradigm (Bailey, 2007). Trustworthiness requires conducting and presenting the research in such a way that the reader can believe, or trust the results and be convinced that the research is worthy of his or her attention (Bailey, 2007). In order to enhance the matter of trustworthiness and quality in the study a number of measures were taken during data collection and analysis. Also member-checking took place; participants were given the opportunity to review the transcription, as a means of trustworthiness, and provide an accurate representation of the lived phenomena.

## METHODS

Case study research is one of the several approaches to qualitative inquiry. However, one of the main characteristics of qualitative research, “is its focus on the intensive study of specific instances, that is cases, of a phenomenon” (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 543). Case studies characteristically use a variety of techniques for gathering data such as questionnaires, archival records, interviewing, observing, and analyzing documents (Rossman & Rallis, 2003); case studies are methodologically diverse. The strength of case studies is their detail, their complexity and their use of multiple sources to obtain multiple perspectives. The result is the thickness of description that allows the reader to interpret and decide the applicability of case learning to another situation. With a well-written case study the reader is empowered to make judgements about the applicability of the learning. Thus, one case study may, by resemblance, shed light on and offer insights about other similar cases (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The Children’s Movement Program, due to its longevity, provided an information-rich case from which research can be derived relating to the purpose of this study. The program was specifically chosen due to the lack of documentation on the benefits of its existence, as well as the many anecdotal comments provided by parents on its social gains. As an individual who has been a coordinator of the program for the last five years, I have seen many children progress socially over the duration of the session, and I wanted to provide accurate evidence of these observations. The participants in the study are children enrolled within the programs, which have parental consent (see Appendix A). Furthermore, other participants of the study are the guardians who agree to take part in the interview process.

### *Ethical Clearance*

Research ethics clearance was submitted in the very beginning stages of the research, May 11, 2009, as clearance was required prior to starting a pilot study. The research received ethical clearance with full approval on July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009 until August 13<sup>st</sup>, 2010 (Appendix P).

### *Pilot Study*

A pilot study was conducted prior to the formal study to test the proposed procedures. For most qualitative and quantitative research studies, 2 to 3 participants are sufficient (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). In the pilot study, a semi-structured interview guide was designed to provide me with field experience. As stated by Kvale (1996), an interviewer's self-confidence is acquired through practice, and conducting several pilot interviews before the actual project interviews will increase his/her ability to create in-depth and dependable interactions. During the pilot study, I interviewed a child and parent separately from one another, and a second interview occurred with a family unit comprised of one parent and two children. The children and families who participated were chosen based on their parental contact with the University and previous participation in the program. Yin (1994) indicates that convenience, access, and geographical proximity can be the main criteria for selecting the participants for a pilot study. This criterion may allow a less structured and a longer relationship to develop between the investigator and interviewees, thereby allowing them to observe different angles and to try varied approaches on an experimental level. Parallel to the primary study the information provided by the participants in the pilot study were documented with a tape recorder, and then transcribed verbatim. The parents/guardians of the child

had the opportunity to review the transcript if desired before any report was written. The results of the pilot study were intended for me to check my effectiveness as an interviewer. One significant difference between the pilot study report and the primary research concerns the expected outcomes; the reports from the pilot interviews should be explicit about aspects of both research design and field procedures (Yin, 1994). The findings of the pilot study suggest that the type of interview to be conducted should be a combination of both family, and child and parent/guardian separate. It was beneficial to have the parent/guardian present to prompt the younger child, as well as assisting with phrasing of the questions to connect with the familiar language of the child. Moreover, having the variation of the two types allowing a more in-depth interview with the parent, when the child is absent, as well as prohibiting the parent from speaking for the child when both are in attendance.

### *Gaining Entry*

Contacting the ‘gatekeeper’ is the primary step to gaining entry into the research setting. The gatekeeper is defined as the people in settings who control avenues of opportunity (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The nature of participant observation requires that the researcher gains access to settings, particularly those to which he or she would not normally have access as a member of the general public. However, since I was already actively involved with the organization and administration of the Children’s Movement Program, I already had access to the program, as well as relationships established with the staff and directors, and with many of the parents and children who have enrolled in the program year to year. Thus a rapport was already developed with the group and gaining entry to the setting was not an impediment to overcome. The site for this research

took place inside the gymnasium of the Walker Complex at Brock University where the Children's Movement Program occurs. The researcher collected the participant observations, field notes, checklist at this venue. However, the interviews took place in the participants' home or within the confinements of Brock University's Centre for Healthy Development through Sport and Physical Activity if more convenient for the participant.

### *Researcher's Role*

The role that I took as the researcher was of an observer, more distinctively seen as a friend of the participants. The key to the role of friend is the explicit expression of positive affect combined with both a relative lack of authority and a lack of sanctioning of the behaviour of those being studied (Fine & Sandstorm, 1988). The approach that I used to explain my presence as the researcher was a shallow cover to the participants, or more specifically the children enrolled in the program. A shallow cover is when the researcher explains that research is being conducted, but is vague or less than completely candid about its goals (Fine & Sandstorm, 1988). When approaching the parents/guardians of the children, I used an explicit cover; the participant observer provided the research subjects, the parents/guardians, with a detailed explanation of the purposes of the research (Fine & Sandstorm, 1988). The participant observer role is one who finds a role within the group and participant in some manner. My role during the program is that of a support position for the staff, an administrator to field questions of parents and guardians and to lend a hand in any other unforeseen circumstance. While my role is not direct to the children enrolled, I still have the opportunity to engage in the curriculum of the program. Due to the extent of my involvement within the Children's

Movement Program, there is the inherent notion that some level of bias will be included within the study. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994) there is no bias-free design. In connection to the use of constructivism, the perspective of the research is committed to questions of knowing and being providing an 'emic' approach to inquiry. The emic approach is also referred to as the insider's perspective with the key concern to understand the phenomenon of interest from the participant's perspective not the researcher's (Merriam, 1998). I have the insider perspective, emic approach, to the research due to my role as a coordinator in previous years. Having an insider's perspective is both beneficial and disadvantageous when conducting research. A benefit to being familiar to the environment is that I do not have to begin the research by situating myself in the routine and structure of the program. Also, a rapport has already been established with the gatekeepers of the program, participants and their families. Conversely, the insider perspective could allow me to overlook some of the details that may stand out to an observer fresh to the program; the details that were once novel have now become part of a comfortable and well-known environment.

#### *Size/Sample*

The sample size for this research was 12 families including 15 child participants which was designed to capture the insights of diverse individuals. The characteristics, gender, and age diversity within the participating sample was dependent on the proportion of children of varying characteristics, gender and age differences that volunteer to participate from within the program. Included in the participant sample were children diagnosed with Autism, Down Syndrome and Central Auditory Processing Syndrome. There were four female child participants and 11 male child participants included in the



sample. Participants were included from all the targeted age categories of 5 to 9 years: four participants aged 5, five participants who are 6 years old, three participants who were 7, one participant who was 8 and two participants aged 9. It is recognized that many other variables besides enrolment in the Children's Movement Program that could have impacted upon children's social development that are out of the investigator's control. As Merriam (1998) states, there is no way of estimating that probability that each of these elements will be included in each of the participants, this case study will be a non-probability sample with purposeful sampling. The logic and power of purposeful sampling derives from the emphasis on in-depth understanding, thus leading to selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the research (Patton, 2002; Richey & Klein, 2007).

#### *Participant Recruitment*

Parents enrol their children in the Children's Movement Program through Recreation Services at Brock University. A parent or guardian can register in three different ways: mail, in person or by phone. Once the registration is complete, a letter of confirmation is given to document the enrolment (see Appendix E). Accompanying their letter of confirmation in August, 2009 and December 2009, I provided a letter of invitation (Appendix B). Within in the letter of invitation I provided my e-mail address for parents/guardians to contact me if they were interested in participating or had any further questions or inquiries. I also sent out the additional consent forms: parental consent form for child observation (see Appendix A), parent assent form for Parent/Guardian Interview (see Appendix C) and an assent form for the child participants

(see Appendix G). I requested that the parents/guardians bring with them on the first day of the program the signed consent forms for child observation, as well as any further questions they may have had. On the first day, I went around to all parents with children in the age category who had not e-mailed me a response to revisit the idea of participating, and to clarify any questions they may have had.

### *Informed Consent*

Informants must be informed about the nature of the research. A consent form for child observation, parent/guardian interviews and child assent forms was provided to the participants (see Appendix A, Appendix C and Appendix G). The notion of informed consent also implies informed rejection. While it would not be possible for me to leave the setting simply because of the refusal of one or a few individuals to participate, these individuals were not being questioned, nor were their actions recorded. Any data collected from a participant who had withdrawn from the study would have been erased immediately. Participants were informed that there was no penalty or negative consequence should they choose to withdraw. There were not any participants in the study that chose to withdraw.

### *Ethics*

The participants of the program were not pressured into participating in the research being conducted, nor did they receive any dissimilar from that of the participants who consented to being included in the study. Moreover, an ethical consideration when conducting observations is observing only the area to which access has been granted. I avoided going into areas designated as 'off limits' to outsiders. Engaging in field research is not a justification for observing private behaviours, places or things (Bailey, 2007).

Additionally, there are ethical issues which are relevant to the interview process. A concern is the rapport that a researcher has with the interviewee; field researchers need to reflect on the point where a social relationship for the sake of a good interview becomes unethical manipulation of the interviewee (Bailey, 2007; Merrell, 2008). This ethical issue was not a concern for the study because the relationships which have been developed with the interviewees (parents/guardians) of the program are purely superficial communication such as; "How are you?" Another ethical concern for interviews is the sensitivity to the context in which an informal interview occurs; being sensitive to the context means establishing a setting for honest answers (Bailey, 2007). Therefore, in the context of this study I provided the interviewees the choice of where to conduct the interview; at the participant's family home or within the confinements of Brock University if more convenient for the participant.

### *Confidentiality*

Another important issue in the field of research is confidentiality. One of the requirements connected to informed consent is to inform the individuals involved in the study whether the research is confidential, anonymous, or neither (Bailey, 2007). The research was not anonymous; meaning that I was able to identify the participants in the study. Since the interviews were conducted in person, I was aware of the children's identity within the context of the program. However, the parents/guardians of the participants in the program and those individuals who engaged in the interviews were assured that any personal information remained confidential within the letter of invitation (Appendix B) and consent forms (Appendix A & C).

### *Transferability*

Transferability in qualitative studies is concerned with the degree to which the individuals studied are representative of individuals to which results might be generalized (Baumgartner, Strong & Hensley, 2002). Transferability can be heightened by careful explanation of the research setting and individuals, and providing thick descriptions of data (Baumgartner, Strong & Hensley, 2002). This study provides both a thorough and careful explanation of the setting and individuals due to my prolonged involvement in the program, as well as the triangulation of methods of data collection. Furthermore, gathering data from a large number of participants yields information from many perspectives, giving the study breadth. In contrast, focusing on a few participants encouraged an in-depth understanding not possible with a larger sample (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The study provides breadth by the participant observation and field notes that were collected on the program as a whole. The study provides an in-depth understanding related to the personal interviews conducted with the number of parents/guardians. Stake (1995), refers to a type of transferability known as naturalistic generalizability (Bailey, 2007). One of the key features distinguishing naturalistic generalizability requires that each individual reader determines whether the research findings are transferable; thus the degree of transferability can vary depending on the experience, awareness, and knowledge of the reader (Bailey, 2007). This notion of transferability can be directly related to the research question. From the parents' perspective, does the Children's Movement Program promote children's development of positive social skills? The knowledge and findings of this case study highlight the benefits of this type of program, allowing the participants to make connections to other

settings because “a good case study brings a phenomenon to life for the readers and helps them to understand its meaning” (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 543).

### *Duration*

The duration of the period of study has to be sufficient to allow saturation of data (Kvale, 1996). CMP allows this because the program duration is a previously established 16-week time frame; comprised of two different sessions beginning in September 2009 and January 2010. Therefore this 16-week time structure makes the time allotted for research substantial. This program provided contact with children of various ages; the availability to interact and observe children ranging from 1-12 years old.

### *Observation*

One method for data collection that was used in this study was participant observation. Merriam (1998) indicates observations are one the primary sources of data in qualitative research; observations take place in the natural setting and represent a firsthand encounter with the phenomenon of interest. Additionally in the interpretive paradigm methodology observations of participants in the setting are utilized (Bailey, 2007). Participant observation is an “overall strategy where the researcher is present in the setting, experiencing and noting events” (Rossmann & Rallis, 2007, p. 172). This type of observation is direct and my role as a researcher was a participant-observer role due to my involvement with the social system of the setting. Therefore, I had an advantage of familiarity with the environment and developing the participants’ trust (Baumgartner, Strong & Hensley, 2002). My prior involvement with the Children’s Movement Program allowed a comprehensive understanding of the program and its course of action, as well as previous social contact to some of the returning members.

The boundaries of the observation remained inside Gym 2, the venue of the Children's Movement Program and within the constraints of the program's time periods. The observations were a mixture of structured and unstructured observations (Bailey, 2007). A structured observation has a habitually well-defined observation guide. In the study of CMP, I used the framework of social skills outlined by Goldstein and McGinnis (1997) and Sarmiento, Almeida, Rauktis and Bernardo (2008) as the predetermined guide for observation. A table was made to utilize this framework in a user-friendly approach (see Appendix F). The framework is based on a chart that was utilized within the previous studies to evaluate the effectiveness of community-based programs to integrate individuals into society, as well as the variables that influence youth social skills and their motivation to attend the program (Sarmiento, Almeida, Rauktis & Bernardo, Winter, 2008). Additionally, an unstructured observation is more flexible and the researcher concentrates on what is deemed relevant as the events unfold (Bailey, 2007). It is common for researchers to mix structured and unstructured observations throughout their time in the field (Bailey, 2007). Spradley (1980) provides recommendations for guiding observations in the early stages of research to ensure to cover the focus on your observations: spaces: the physical places; objects: the physical things that are present; actors: the people involved; act: single actions that people do; activity: a set of related activities that people carry out; time: the sequencing that takes place over time; goals: the things people are trying to accomplish; and feeling: the emotions felt and expressed. However, when first arriving in the field, I engaged and looked at all areas that could guide the observation and then as my research questions in the setting become clearer, I narrowed my focus.

Each week I observed the participants in the study for 10 minutes during their one hour session at the Children's Movement Program. I would alter the pattern of observations each week by rotating the participants' order to ensure I observed each participant at every point within the session. According to Wylie (1999), being systematic in one's approach allows for certainty that each child in the group has been given equal attention. I sat near the front of the gym next to the stereo trying to be as concealed as possible. Using social skills check list (Appendix I) I checked off the social skills that I saw the participant demonstrating and provided the context and field notes beside the observed behaviour. The typical schedule of a Saturday morning including routine and observation times is documented in Appendix J (Observation Schedule on Saturday).

#### *Field Notes*

In combination with the participant observation, field notes were collected during the duration of the observations to document the various accounts of the program. Field notes are written reports of what the researcher sees, hears, experiences and thinks about over the course of collecting data in a qualitative study (Bogdan & Bilken, 1992). Field notes are the detailed record of the developments of the study, providing a rich description upon which analysis is based; these notes can be portraits of participants, reconstruction of conversations, description of settings, and accounts of particular events and activities (Baumgartner, Strong & Hensley, 2002).

Two types of field notes were collected during this study. Field notes to provide context for specific social skills observed as indicated above, as well as field notes that created a data journal for each week of observations and the interviews. The field notes connected to the social skills were written on the social skills check list ensuring the

context was remembered in later stages. These field notes would have been documented for seven consecutive weeks for each participant. I used these field notes to review prior to the interview to provide background for the questions. The field notes that I collected to create the data journal were my thoughts, feelings and observations of the researcher during the data collection stages. These notes assisted me in providing realistic detail for the results and findings chapter, as well as helpful notes when progressing through the interviews. The data journal in entirety provided 11 pages of annotations. Following are examples of the data journal field notes.

*Example of Observation Field Notes*

November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009

Walking into the final day of the Fall CMP, there was sadness in Gym 2. New friends would have to say goodbye and wish each other a happy holiday before seeing each other again in January for the winter session. However, we had one more exciting activity session to engage in before the end! The movement concept for the last day is always a FUN day with an incorporation and review of many of the skills learned throughout the session. The first activity required the participants to use different types of locomotion to travel around, until the instructor stopped the music and had the participants call out “How many?” The instructor responds with a number indicating how many people you need in your group, as well as a body part and a level. These further instructions give the group the body part they need to match to be connected to the group, as well as the level that the group needs to be at high, medium or low. On the sidelines watching this activity take place, the cooperation and inclusion that has been fostered in the participants and volunteers was remarkable. The way that each child ran to a group confidently, never



hesitating to be rejected from the group setting, as well as how people yelled to each other to join the group, displayed the connections, comfort and social acceptance that had been fostered in the last 8 weeks. Lastly, as the certificates of CMP completion were handed out, the smiles on the participants' faces were of proud accomplishment as they rush to their parents to show them their job well done.

Activities: 1. How many? 2. Dance Troika 3. Beach Ball Bocce

*Example of Interview Field Notes*

November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009

The young boy of age six, with Mom and sister by his side happily followed me to the Brock office where the interview would take place. He followed me in and sat down immediately, and his younger sister tried to do the same, where Mom intervened to explain that she wasn't part of the study. She left sadly wanting to be a part of whatever her brother was doing. I first asked the little boy if he was nervous to be in the big office or about talking to me and telling me stories. His response was "Not at all", and that he would try his best. I explained that I was doing a project for school and that he was helping, which seemed to satisfy his curiosity as to why I was going to be asking him questions. Also, explaining and showing him the recorder interested him as well, and he was excited to be able to hear his own voice at the end. The interview was conducted separately from his mom, which was challenging and successful in many diverse ways. It was challenging as there wasn't anyone to assist with familiar examples to lead out answers to the questions, but with the link to school ideas, we had some success. For example, when asking what he learned at CMP, I had him make the connection to that he learns adding and subtracting in math, spelling in language, and that seemed to trigger an

answer. It is just difficult to pull out specific answers, as well as ones with quantity and quality. The interview with the Mom, was successful, as well as added to some of the information from the son. Also, with the absence of the child in the interview, mom was able to comment more about home behaviour without an argument arising. After the conclusion of the interview, the mother and I chatted for a bit and she included some ideas about how it is so important to build fundamental skills when individuals are young because as we grow up, the context might change, however the skills needed to handle situations remain the same. A child's world and environment is so small, but to them those minor events seem catastrophic. Their fears and feelings are legitimate and shouldn't be brushed aside because even though they appear so insignificant to the size, scale and bigger picture of the adult world, they are the building blocks to a successful and well adjusted grown-up.

### *Interviews*

Interviews were used in this study to follow-up on information gained through the initial observations (Kraine & Baird, 2005). Merriam (1998) states that interviews are another primary source of qualitative research which allow for a second account to support the observation and field notes.

The [personal interview] process is informative, allows for in-depth discussions and provides a first-person explanation. The interview is an evolving face-to-face conversation between two persons; in a transcription, the conversational interaction between two physically present persons becomes abstract and fixed in a written form. (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 177)

The interviews took place in two different structures: the parent/guardian of the program and the child participant separately and the parents/guardians and participants simultaneously. When the parent and child agreed to participate (see letter of invitation Appendix B) they took part in semi-structured open-ended interviews (see parental interview guide Appendix D and participant interview guide Appendix F). A semi-structured interview provided questions for the interviewees that were general in context and allowed for the interview to move in an unplanned pathway for the researcher's needs, comfort of the participant or diversion from questions formulated in advance (Baumgartner, Strong & Hensley, 2002). The information provided by the participant was documented with a digital tape recorder. This method allowed for permanent documentation of every word. I began the interview with the semi-structured interview scheduled; however, additional questions were added as the participant discussed themes and topics I had not previously considered. Another element of interviewing that adds to further understanding is follow-up questions. "Follow-up questions take the interview to a deeper level by asking more detail and are a natural part of any conversation" (Ulin, Robinson, Tolley & McNeill, 2002, p.86 as cited in Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 186). The follow-up questions allowed me to ensure understanding of the interviewee's response and inspire further discussion. If I had not asked the follow-up question then the initial response could have misinterpreted and the full response would not have been elicited. By allowing the focus of the interview to change as necessary, the interview is naturalistic in nature, as the researcher was not be manipulating or controlling the direction of the findings (Patton, 2002). Following the interview, I transcribed the words of the participant verbatim.

The interviews took place in the participant's family home or within the confines of Brock University's Centre for Healthy Development through Sport and Physical Activity office. The environment in which the interview will takes place has an impact on the success of the interview, as there are many extenuating factors that can impact the participants' feelings. The best interview environment is one that is uncluttered, comfortable, warm and friendly, perhaps with a few bright children's posters on the wall to make the child feel at ease. If the child feels threatened or anxious, any reduction in formality can assist in relieving this. For example, when conducting the interviews, I explained that the office at Brock was similar to a play room, creating a familiar image for the space. A starting off point for the interviews was I asked the children they could draw a picture that represented the Children's Movement Program or their favourite activity. The drawing acted as a second stimulus during the interview and provided a concrete idea that the children could reference. Often having the children explain their picture provided detail that I would have not known to ask about. The drawing task also gave the children an activity to engage in when participating in a family unit interview and questions were being directed at the parent. Each interview lasted no more than 60 minutes. I asked permission to record the conversation. Once transcribed, the audiotape was erased. Participants were given the opportunity to review the transcription. The format of the interviews varied between a family unity interview and a parent and child separate interview, as a result of the findings of the pilot study. To be considered a family unit interview, the presence of the child and at least one parent/guardian living in the same household had to be in attendance. The interviews that were conducted as family unit interviews fluctuated in the number of people participating. Some family interviews

had all family members present: mother, father and siblings, whereas others had one parent and a sibling and others just had one parent and the participant. The parent/child interviews were all conducted in the same fashion; one parent and the CMP participant were the only individuals present during their interviews. The inclusiveness of the program incorporated children with varying abilities to take part in the interview process. Creating a structure that is best suited to the interviewee's needs is important and beneficial. The mother of a participant with Down Syndrome thought that the interview might be more successful if only she and another son participated in the interview as her other son has limited verbal capabilities. She offered to discuss with her son diagnosed with Down Syndrome about his thoughts and feelings prior to the interview and provide narratives on his behalf. I e-mailed her the interview script prior to the interview so she could converse with her other son about his thoughts and feelings on the topic.

Interviewing adults and children are diverse. The questioning of both children and adults added to the results of the study by providing different perspectives. The data collected from the parents was more in depth as adults are able to create a more thorough and direct response. The parents were able to recount more detail and reflect on a much larger scope when responding to the questions. A beneficial aspect of interviewing the parents was that often they were able to fill some of the gaps in their children's responses, or reconfirm with more detail the same narrative. However, disregarding the child's viewpoint in this study would have been unfavourable as their development is the main focus as well as they are the sole participants of the program. Children also provide a viewpoint that is often invaluable and overlooked by an adult, as they have the ability to view the world politically unencumbered. Although the interviews varied in the number

of interviewees present, both were semi-structured in format and provided the experience of both a one-on-one interview and a focus group.

*One-on-one/Personal (Parent/Child Interviews)*

The parent/guardian and child interviews can be categorized as one-on-one or personal interviews. This type of interview has the researcher meeting with each member of the study and based on their discussion and conversation, the desired information is obtained (Baumgartner, Strong & Hensley, 2002). This type of interview, in the context of the research, was when the parents/guardians and children were interviewed separately (PCI). There were two parent/guardian and child interviews conducted within the study.

*Focus Group (Family Unit Interviews)*

The family interviews can be loosely termed as a focus group, as it involved interviewing more than one person at the same time. A group interview involves addressing questions to a group of individuals who are assembled for a specific purpose. Group interviews are utilized widely by social science researchers who refer to them as focus group interviews (Gall, Borg, Gall, 1996). Krueger (1998) defines a focus group as

[a] carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening environment [. . .] The discussion is relaxed, comfortable, and often enjoyable for participants as they share their ideas and perceptions. Group members influence each other by responding to ideas and comments in the discussion. (p.18)

Researchers are finding that the interactions among the participants stimulate them to state feelings, perceptions and beliefs that they would not express when interviewed individually (Gall, Borg, Gall, 1996). The family unit interview (FUI) within the research

was characterized as a focus group due to all participants being interviewed concurrently. There were ten family unit interviews conducted within the study.

### *Novel approach*

The results of the pilot study provided a unique methodological approach for the interview process of the primary study. The combination of the one-on-one interview and the focus groups is an approach which is not common. Many studies have used one method or the other. For example, Molinari, Everri and Fruggeri (2010), conducted a study looking at the transition period between childhood and adolescence and used a focus group approach, interviewing the family as a whole. Younger, Schneider, and Guirguis-Young (2008), examine how children describe the shyness in their peers used one-on-one interviews with children to try and extract findings. More distinctive, yet still dissimilar to the method used in this study were Vickerius and Sandberg (2006), who interviewed adults wanting them to recall their childhood perspectives of play; the method used was still a one-on-one interview.

### *Time Sensitivity of Interviews*

Another issue that is related to conversing with children is their memory capacity. Children will not be comparable to adults until the end of the primary school years and so young children often need support in remembering; this can be improved by using familiar items and individuals (Greig & Taylor, 1999). As seen in Appendix K, the interviews were conducted both when the program was still in session as well as after the completion of the final week.

CMP finished at the end of November for the first session and finished in March for the second session displaying that the interviews were conducted at different points

within the program. Some of the interviews were conducted after a considerable amount of time had passed prior to my inquiring about his or her feelings about the program. The scope of the dates allowed for insight at different stages within the program, but was mainly due to compatibility with the interviewees schedules.

### *Scheduling Interviews*

Once the program had been operating for two weeks, I approached all the participants' parents, who had given consent to be a part of my research study to gained their contact information and see the method of communication they preferred: e-mail or telephone. From there, I contacted the parents to inquire about their availability and ask which format of interview (FUI or PCI) they felt would be most successful for their child. Also, within this communication, I asked their preference for the location of the interview. Scheduling interviews was often difficult when trying to find a free hour for busy parents', however the week following the conclusion of the program was often most convenient as the parents and children could be interviewed at the time frame that was previously allotted to CMP. The interview schedule including date, time, location, format and length can be viewed as Interview Schedule (Appendix K).

### *Participant Representation*

For an analysis to be considered successful, it must be true with two specific areas of the researcher's audience: members of the research setting and colleagues who are experts in the field (Fetterman, 1989). However, there is a difference between a description and finding that seems false and something that is incorrect or a conflicting interpretation of the setting. The researchers who ask the members of the setting to review a draft of the facts will have an easier time distinguishing between the mere



controversial and the blatantly wrong (Bailey, 2007). Therefore as previously mentioned I provided all participants with the opportunity to review the transcript before analysis, and furthermore I conferred with a colleague to confirm and discuss the evolving themes from the transcripts and observations after analysis.

### *Data Analysis*

The method of analysis for the beginning stages of study, the field notes and observations were reviewed to provide context for the interviews. After the completion of all interviews, the verbatim transcription and member checking process the method for data analysis of the parent/guardian interviews was the *Ad Hoc* approach. The *Ad Hoc* approach includes three processes: meaning coding, meaning condensation and meaning interpretation. These approaches are analysis focusing on meaning. Meaning coding “involves attaching one or more keywords to a text segment in order to permit later identification of a statement,” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 201). Meaning condensation can be described as a process “through which long interview passages are distilled into shorter statements, retaining fidelity to the original words of the interview participant. The researcher conducts a narrative description of the phenomenon of interest” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 296). Meaning condensation allows the researcher to take a longer narrative and frame it as a more concise workable recount while keeping the original idea from the interviewee. Finally, meaning interpretation is the process in which the researcher goes beyond the obvious meaning of the text and puts forward “more or less speculative interpretations of the text” (Kvale, 1996, p. 193).

### *Limitations*

Every research study has its set of limitations, as a study cannot provide every situation possible within the circumstances. As the methods and methodology of the research study have been outlined the following are the perceived limitations of this study. According to Glense (2006) part of demonstrating the trustworthiness of the data is to realize these limitations and provide the best results under these certain conditions. Detailing those circumstances helps readers to understand the nature of the data. As I am both the researcher and curriculum coordinator in the program, an element that is a limitation is my dual role at the program of researcher and curriculum coordinator; it allows for more insight and understanding to what goes on, but at the same time takes me away from the sole task of the observations at hand. Another limitation within this research was that the observations were for only one hour for eight weeks; the time of each session is not very intensive at one hour, once a week. If increased intervention time is connected to improvement in social skills, then more time spent with the youth in the group may improve the outcomes. However, with the nature of the program running for 16 weeks, cumulating in 16 hours of observation time, it is possible for significant observations to be attained. Another limitation is that there are a diverse amount of activities going on at the same time which at times conflicts with the observations and provides many different options for viewing. The interference from instructors and parents limit the observations displaying the children's true actions, as the instructor and parents have the opportunity to influence their behaviour.

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In order that the data presented and analyzed is appreciated in its fullness, the initial image of the Children's Movement Program is presented in story form from the parent's point of view. Following the narration is the data supported by parents and participants accounts accompanied by discussion.

#### *The pathway to the Children's Movement Program*

As I walk up the outside Walker Complex pathway, holding my son's hands and opening the doors, I can see brightly coloured signs accompanied by Brock students wearing baby blue Children's Movement Program t-shirts pointing me in the direction of Gym 2. As I get closer I hear a combination of child and adult voices welcoming each other with friendly; "Good mornings!" and the sound of children's music playing in the background. I have heard if you are lucky enough to get to the program just prior to its start time, you have the pleasure of hearing the staffs' morning song "I'm Alive, Awake, Alert, Enthusiastic" as they get energized for the participants' arrival. Just outside the gymnasium, Billy points to a white board and tries to sound out the Purple and blue bubble letters written on it; "Welcome to the Children's Movement Program". I subsequently shared with Billy that the board also highlights the weekly theme, "Western Welcome", accompanied by a few subject-related pictures such as horses, and cowboys and girls. The board also contains reminders for parents/guardians; it welcomes and includes something for every individual entering the setting. Also, near the wall on the floor lies a long red carpet with shoes of various sizes lined up. Following suit Billy plops down on the floor and rips the Velcro back on his shoes. I look to the left and read a sign

that says “Absolutely no street shoes permitted in the Gym”. Following protocol I seat myself in one the few chairs beside the red carpet and remove my own shoes. Still sitting on the red carpet, Billy points to a mural that is on the wall in front of him. As he bends his little neck upwards to try to take in all the different images, he tries to identify what each is doing. Billy discovers a hockey player, soccer player, a runner, a fencer, gymnast, a cyclist, and then a man throwing a disk in the nude. This finding led to the explanation of the event discus and how in the beginnings of physical education, the Greeks used to perform in the nude, which of course made Billy giggle. The parts of the mural which I found most intriguing were the words painted within the pictures: peace, equality, cooperation, inclusion, nonviolence and respect, all words that described the type of environment I would want for Billy. Taking Billy’s hand I led him towards the door of the gymnasium hoping that this environment would match the words painted on the outside wall.

Greeted at the door by a volunteer, she steers us towards our age appropriate section of the gymnasium. The gym is divided into three sections; chairs lined up for the programs’ observers: parents/guardians, grandparents and siblings divides the area into different age groupings. The chairs are placed in rows between the different movement areas, with the chairs alternating the direction they face in twos, allowing for conversation and observation in different age categories. Some of the observers read a newspaper, some chat with spouses, some mingle with friends both old and new, some involve in the programs activities, but the majority of them hold a coffee in hand. Walking over to our age group, a volunteer asks my son his name and displays for him a bat shaped name tag to wear on his back. Each group is specified by a differently shaped

name tag, as well as the staff and volunteers, thereby creating a familiar setting and making the transition to have everybody be on a first name basis with each other that much simpler. The program offers three different times sessions beginning at 9:00 a.m., then again at 10:00 a.m. and finally at 11:00 a.m., with all sessions running for an hour in length. The areas are separated by ages: 1 to 2 years, 3 to 4 years and 5 to 7 years, however at the 11:00 session, the groups adjust to 1 to 2 years, 3 to 5 years and 8 to 12 years. The change in the division allows the program to reach a larger scope and allow parents/guardians the opportunity to sign up all children in their family. Additionally, the alteration in the older age group allows the enrolment of children with differing movement capabilities based on developmental abilities as opposed to age appropriateness.

## MEANING CODING

### *Stepping into the world of play: environment*

Looking in Gym 2 on a Saturday, an outsider would think that the participants were acting strangely, but only those involved in the program know that the children are engaging in activities related to the program's weekly theme. This first week, the theme is Western Welcome, guiding the participants to pretend to lasso horses, imitate various animals and travel like cowboys and girls while working on various movement concepts and movement themes. Pictures and suitable decorations have been added to the setting to illuminate the week's theme. The volunteers and some of the participants have dressed up to correspond with the Western theme. Little plaid shirts and vests run around engaged in activity. A little girl carries her favourite stuffed horse as she pretends to have the horse help her with her movement challenges. The themes are created to allow the children to

have a familiar point to engage in the environment, a parent comments on her opinion of these weekly themes, “I like how you work it into the theme so they can connect, that’s cool too” (Leah). Moreover, a 5 year old participant tells about a favourite weekly theme and what he learned “I liked the week with airplanes and we learned how to throw” (Jackson).

Passing by the gymnasium between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. the visual appearance of the program can be defined as “organized chaos”. “When you look in there, it looks like a free for all but when you are in there, it is very well organized” (Raelyn). Children are engaged in various activities during free time, and bring their imaginations alive as they engage in a variety of guided movement forms and tasks. The CMP session is organized with a combination of pre-planned activities and free time. The activities are designed and guided by the instructors with the assistance of the many volunteers. Each week focuses on a different movement theme and concept (body awareness, space awareness, relationships, effort) which steers the focus of the lesson. Free time allows the children to revisit a favourite or challenging movement from the organized activities or explore the other equipment options. Both parents and participants observe the difference in structures and share their own accounts:

- “The first half is the activities which is what I like best and the second half is the free time which they like best” (Raelyn-parent).
- “The mix of activities, the structured and the free time. I really liked it and it was good because they enjoy it too” (Diana-parent).
- “We do fun games, we get a bit of free time to play” (Jackson-participant).

- [Describing CMP], “I think its activity that structured but unstructured. You have it in stages, structured than free time” (Betty-parent).

### *Apparatus and equipment*

The image of the program is a sea of colours and people. Intermixed within the playing area are the volunteers wearing brightly coloured program t-shirts of red and blue and children of diverse ages, sizes and appearances. The gymnasium is white in colour but the environment is lively with enthusiasm. The floor is a light wood colour with a mixture of blue, black, green, red and light grey lines painted in various patterns to appease the boundaries for many activities. There are six basketball nets which have been raised since they are not an appropriate height for the participants. One of the older participants exclaims, “[m]yyyy favourite thing about CMP is the gym” (Anna). The gymnasium is covered with diverse types of equipment. The set-up differs from week to week, but there are many items which are consistently available. Parts of the floor are covered with bright blue gymnastic mats, providing a comfortable setting for exploring different transfers of weights. There are sizeable primary coloured foam shapes, children travelling around on “Turtles” and scooters, hockey nets with small foam sticks as well as gator balls and soccer balls. Scoops of neon green, pink, orange and yellow and white whiffle balls await a participant’s interest in the corner, hula hoops in stands create an obstacle to go around or through, and large diverse coloured puzzle pieces create a circle in the little one’s area while creating a pathway in the middle movement section. A parent of the program alludes to her satisfaction with the content we offer; “The facility you have here is amazing and the equipment is awesome, such a variety” (Diana).

In addition to all the interchangeable pieces of equipment, the program also utilizes larger gymnastic apparatus however; this does not mean that the movement responses are predetermined. “What I like about it is there are all these different apparatus and that they are climbing and balancing and walking and that they are using the gymnastics equipment, but not specifically for gymnastics. I like the availability of that” (Raelyn). In the 5 to 7 and 8 to 12 years section, the Canadian Climber is brought out from the wall to provide a different venue for movement exploration. In addition, there is a climbing rope that many of the children have expressed as their favourite item among others, “I get to swing on the ropes and slide down the bench and walk on the balance beam” (Ava). Also added to the movement area is a selection of mats, benches, small wooden boxes, pommel horses, trestles, and a balance beam. For some children, the exposure to the equipment is familiar, but for more it is new and uncharted. A unique part of the Children’s Movement Program is that the venue is within a university gymnasium and that there is access to such a large choice of equipment. Part of the excitement for the programs participants and parents is seeing and uncovering the possibilities with the equipment each week. An anecdotal response from a parent voices the love for the variety in equipment at the Children’s Movement Program, as the dissatisfaction for another program is proclaimed “I’ve heard that the Games Galore is boring. He’s really upset because there isn’t any equipment like at Brock” (Leah).

*Community of Learners: Departments, Staff/Volunteers, Participants, Observers*

The Children’s Movement Program fosters many diverse interactions among different people creating many new types of relationships. The age scope of individuals in the gymnasium for this program ranges from babies to elders; in attendance there is the



programs participants ranging from ages 1 to 12 years, the observers consisting of parents/guardians, grandparents and siblings, as well as the many supporting staff and volunteers that make the program possible.

### *Departments*

For the reason that the program is supported by a number of Departments at Brock University, there is a diversity of individuals who pass through the gymnasium during the Children's Movement Program. Resources are provided by Recreation Services through advertising, organization and support with a department advisor. The students who instruct and organize the program are typically from the Physical Education and Kinesiology Department, as well as a faculty advisor who helps with curriculum development. Also, the volunteers of the program come from a variety of departments across the university, creating a unique blend of perspectives and expertise.

### *Staff and Volunteers*

The staff and volunteers are all Brock students who assist in carrying out the program. The instructors teach the pre-planned activities, which include a combination of educational gymnastics, creative dance and cooperative games focused around a different movement theme and fun CMP theme. The amount of students who want to volunteer their time is overwhelming and is part of the reason the program is such a success. The passion and vivacity they display when engaging in the activities or the engagement with the participants is exceptional; it is often difficult to tell who the actual children are, a parent describes the atmosphere as "Big kids playing with small kids" (John). A unique characteristic of this program is the high ratio of 'helpers' to participants "I like the ratio too of all the CMP shirts" (Diana).

However, it is not just the number of volunteers that CMP has which makes the program effective; it is what the volunteers provide to the participants and parents. A parent comments about the lack of male role models available for her son, “[a]nother thing I like is how there are so many staff, especially for a boy, to have so many 19 and 20 year old guys being there doing what they are doing, I think is really important. There seems to be a lot of it for her [daughter], but far less available for [my son], so I think that is a really good thing as well” (Raelyn). Many of the parents commented that one of the reasons they keep coming back to the program is the people:

- “I was going to say that the thing that does it for us is the people. It is the people, so for Abby (daughter) the connection to Shanayde (volunteer) is there. We will talk about Shanayde at home; Abby wants her to come to her birthday party. It’s the bond that they have with the adults that is phenomenal. I did comment on that evaluation paper, it’s the staff; I don’t think the program would be as successful without the staff. You have a good group of people. You got a handful of people in there they just make it for the kids and the parents, because we wouldn’t come back if they weren’t” (Betty).
- “We liked the interaction that the kids have with the volunteers, the head person and the other kids” (Erin).
- “But also it’s the instructors. It’s them wanting to be involved and be there. I don’t think in all the years we have been at CMP, I have ever seen an instructor that doesn’t want to be there, some are volunteers but they all look enthusiastic to be there” (Diana).

Parents also comment about the relationships that their children create at CMP. Often children associate the Saturday morning with getting to see a certain person, either a staff/volunteer or fellow participant. “They come here the shoes are off so eager to come and they don’t even wait for us anymore, the shoes are off and they are in there, playing and going to the people they know, she goes to Shanayde (volunteer), and he finds Tommy and Neil (participants)” (Brett). “You guys have so many volunteers and he usually picks you know the one person that he likes throughout it and usually plays with them” (Molly). Additionally, the connections that some of these children make with the program staff and volunteers’ assists in making the atmosphere feel secure. The participants know that their ‘big friends’ are always there to help them conquer their movement challenges and have fun. “I really like the people that do it, the people that help you; they help you get into it” (Jackson).

### *Program Participants*

The participants of the program are a diverse combination of children. They vary in age, size, interests and ability; all unique and the focal point of the program. The Children’s Movement Program creates its own environment that the participants engage in every Saturday morning. For some, this is the only community-based program they are enrolled, while for others it is one of many. Additionally, some of the participants know each other from other environments, while some are being introduced for the first time. The program creates a setting that offers automatic playmates with the possibility of building or maintaining a relationship. For example, a parent discusses her satisfaction that her son’s engagement in the program has required him to engage with fellow chums, as he tends to play alone in other situations. “I like the fact that he was able to go here

and learn to play, or be forced to play with the other kids as well” (Molly). Whereas a participant talks about his peers from CMP, and where his initial introduction to them, “I met Luke when I was like 3 or 4, he’s my friend when I was in JK and SK because he was at my school. I already knew Abby and Adam from swimming. I know Page already from school” (Jared). Moreover, the mother voices her son’s love for coming to the program to be able to play with his friends who have moved from his school allowing the relationship to resume; “Jared enjoys it so much because he gets to play with his buddies, the twins so there is that social element to that” (Jenna). Another distinctive feature of the program is the large age range, allowing for the whole family to attend; children participating and parents/guardians observing. A participant comments on how she gets to play with her younger brother at the program. She spoke about this as one of her favourite things, especially since it is a rare occurrence. “At free time I get to play with Dylan, which only happens at Brock Gym” (Ava). The setting provides an opportunity for positive interaction, as a parent observes, “But you look at it, in 8 weeks they are all running around, they know each other and never a cross word between any of them, I have never seen one person upset. You put 15 kids together at school, there is going to be someone who is picked on. But in this environment they are all running around willy nilly, they talk to each other and stop and play and never a cross word, It is a very positive environment” (Brett).

### *Observers*

In accompaniment to the participants are the observers of the programs, the individuals in charge of bringing the excitable partakers. Similar to the participants, the Children’s Movement Program atmosphere provides an opportunity for social interaction

among the observers. Many parents take this opportunity to talk to a partner or catch up with other friends who have their children enrolled, or share a conversation with an unfamiliar fellow parent/guardian. A child highlights that his mom and fellow participants' mom are childhood friends that reconnect every Saturday. "My mom and Sheila, Larry and Jimmy's mom, have known each other since I think they were in grade three. And they are really good friends" (Jared). In addition, it is often these social relationships that develop outside the program that entice new participants to enrol, thereby transferring the connection from one environment to another. "It was because of Wilma [that we heard about the program], which the 4 kids all go to the same private school together, and she told us about the program" (Betty).

*Parent Observation - "we get to watch you having fun" (Brett)*

As mentioned above, the parents/guardians have the opportunity to socialize as well as observe the participants. In contrast, there are other community-based programs that discourage parents/guardians from staying and watching the activity, which at times can cause anxiety in a child who is not used to being separated from his or her mother and father. For example, asking the young girl about why she didn't like soccer she expressed part of it was "because I got nervous a lot" (Abby). Her mom added in "it was the separating from us, which is why she was like that" (Betty). The presence of the participant's parents often provides feelings of security and comfort in the earlier stages of the program. Often as the children become more comfortable in the environment the need and assurance of parent presence lessens; "[w]e couldn't even go away for a coffee; we used to have to sneak away. Now they don't care it's a comfort here for them" (Brett and Betty). The nature and openness of CMP allows the participants to "[. . .] feel like

they can come over to us if need be, and it's not shunned upon" (Jenna).

Parents/guardians appreciate the opportunity to watch their children accomplish movement challenges and have fun. The program offers the option for parents/guardians to see their children in an atmosphere to which they usually only hear through anecdotal recounts. Two mothers voice their feelings about being able to observe,

- "I think they enjoy having us there because they go to school all day and we can't see what they do in gym class, whereas they are excited to show us that they can go on the Tarzan rope or whatever" (Jenna).
- "I think it's the time where you get to sit and watch your children enjoy themselves and you can just see...they come running over 'Mommy, Mommy did you see' [ . . . ] they want you to see what they can do" (Diana).

#### *The Philosophy behind the fun*

The Children's Movement Program incorporates the foundations of physical education, education gymnastics, creative dance, and developmental games; parallel to the Brock Physical Education program. Parents are positive to the fact that their children are engaging in a learning environment that is similar to a university program; "What I really like is that it's part of the curriculum at Brock" (Jenna). This movement approach permits a variety of responses to tasks, fostering the opportunity to participate within an inclusive environment, aiding them in the development of self-discovery and social skills. (Children's Movement Program, Winter 2010, brochure). This unique opportunity for children will offer them the chance to increase their movement potential and advance their social skills using a whole child approach to activities. This inclusive environment welcomes participants of all varying abilities. CMP offers the option of a movement

partner to allow all children the opportunity for enrolment and success. A movement partner is a volunteer who works with a child requiring more one-on-one assistance while engaging in the activities. The pedagogical approach breaks down the skills and allows for a variety of movement responses; the tasks are open-ended to allow choice for the participants. Many parents comment about the suitability and value of this approach:

- “I was really impressed by your approach to physical education, because you broke it down into individual movements. It’s difficult to incorporate him into a group game, but here he is still getting the same skills, like kicking a soccer ball, that is the main reason it appealed to me” (Leah).
- “When you were teaching them to throw the ball I don’t think I ever in my brain broke it down like that. You broke it down into the different parts” (Leah).
- “It’s a Saturday morning program where kids go and they teach them how to stretch through different games and how to move your body in different ways” (Angela).
- “That’s why I like this program, it’s the whole concept of movement, they are learning the large body skills than eventually they are going to be able to do the smaller specialized ones” (Sheila).

*Program organization – “we learn exercise, we dance, we play games” (Adam).*

The way the instructors arrange and organize the children within the activities impacts the way the participants interact, feel while participating as well as the types of movement forms in which they engage in. The instructors focus on cooperative learning, where everyone is working towards the same goal. A parent explains her observation on how all the activities whether performed individually or in a group are set up to make the

environment more social and the offer the participants the ability to make friends “I think because it is a group environment, you do things as a group, you learn as a group and then it’s a lot of team. Like the obstacle course or the relay, it’s now ok you go as a team and come back, or a member of the team goes and although you are doing it by yourself it’s still for the team” (Jenna).

It is the organization into groups and partners that often compels children who usually play solitarily to join with a peer or a group. The movement form of dancing also structures children to work together. A mother comments on how the program organization reflects in her son’s social aptitude. “I think the actual program itself [is what helps them connect and interact socially], like just the dancing think I’m going to use as an example. She got him to do the partnering up which was very good. I found that the partnering up really helped, because um it gave him the opportunity to be with someone else. It helped him socialize, because it actually helped him to pair up with someone, otherwise he tends to play by himself.” (Molly). The same mother explains that she is fond of the structured play and its impact on her son’s communications, “Like when you guys did the free time, he I don’t think ever played with anyone. He would go off by himself, so he would do the turtle and never really play with anyone else. But when they are teaching him when they were doing their little activities he’d always be paired up with someone. So he would always be interacting with someone, which was good” (Molly).

A consistent observation and remark from both parents/guardians and children is about the pairing up of participants for the activities. A young boy talks about how he loves the program and is excited to engage in any activity with no preference as to who



he will cooperate with; “I like everything; I don’t care what it is I’ll do it. When we are in partners I don’t care what partner I’m in” (Adam). Another participant when asked to describe what he does at CMP “we play in groups and in partners” (Jared).

Parents/guardians share their opinions on how the instructors and CMP help the children to develop socially, fostering partner and group relations:

- “[The instructor from CMP helps set things up and instruct them to develop socially] because I know quite often that they are paired off in the activity, you know it is pick a partner and do things” (Anthony).
- “Yes you definitely get them to interact, I hear you say ok introduce yourself to one another, which is how Jackson met Jack” (Diana).
- “All the games are for everybody and then you make 3 or 4 sections and then you rotate so you’re in a little group there” (Angela).
- “It helps foster [social skills] because you have all the volunteers who are trying to keep everybody as a group” (Angela).

### *Inclusion*

An inclusive environment meets the needs of all participants, it offers assistance for those who require it, and offers choice and variety for all participants to enjoy and succeed within the activities. When observing the program, the untrained eye may not notice that certain participants do have movement partners, as many of the volunteers are interacting and assisting all the children. The planned activities have the opportunity for simplifications and extensions to meet all the participants’ needs, providing options to challenge individuals at their own level. A parent who has had her son in the program for 5 years voices her opinion on the integration of the program “They are really good with

the handicapped students, they actually try to help they do the things, not babying them” (Erin). Another parent comments on how successful the program is for her son, who has recently been diagnosed with central auditory processing disorder, “And you have so many instructors there to pick up the slack, just say he doesn’t hear something especially with having CAP and the acoustics in the gym, in a normal setting he would just miss the instructions” (Betty). A father comments on how the program is set up to be appropriate for all, “[b]ecause you are dealing with a wide variety of skill levels, intellectual levels may be if that is the right phrase to use, you have to keep it really wide open [. . .]. (Anthony). The opportunity for participants to choose their own movement response to the open ended tasks allows all them to feel victorious and does not place children on the spot; it provides the participants the ability to feel equal to their counterparts. A father voices his feelings about the difference between a competitive soccer environment and CMP, “The thing with soccer, let’s say you aren’t good at it, you stand out, if you aren’t good at this you just blend in with everyone else, and everybody’s difficulties just vanish” (Brett). However, the integration of children with varying abilities provides visual encouragement within the group; “I think it’s better for an integrated program because you get kids who can do everything and it might encourage those lacking in skills to try that and perhaps get to that level” (Angela). The movement partner is a support system for the child while at the program; a participant voices his opinion of his movement partner “I really like him. I think its better having him with me when we play. He helps just explaining the game to me if I didn’t understand” (David). The participants at the program vary in diagnosis of special needs; some children struggle with physical abilities, while some are working on social relationships. Parents enrol their children for

dissimilar reasons, but the movement partner option is one that provides the chance for all children to participate without the stress being on the parent/guardian, a mother comments on the difficulties in finding support within programs, “[t]he fact that he has Caitlin (movement partner) is great, usually you have to bring someone on your own or fight..that has been invaluable for us” (Leah).

### *Choice*

The structured and unstructured play offers both direction and choice to the participants. The activities while pre-planned still offer choice within the movement response. For example, an instruction such as ‘travel over the box’ can lead to a multitude of actions. The option of choice allows the participant to engage in his or her own way and participate in a manner that suits his or her needs and abilities. Many of the participants discussed their feelings about having choice within the environment:

- “We play a lot of different games, there was a very big category of different things with different exercises like you could choose to balance or climb” (Iris).
- “[There was choice] but just not in free time, there were different categories even within the activities. Like the one where you needed to do partner balances, you got to choose which ones you wanted to do and the order” (Iris).
- “I like the games and the free time, with all the stuff you can do for free time, I like choices” (David).

The choices within the program is not just favourable for the participants but for the parents/guardians as well. “[The characteristics that were appealing were] especially for Adam, it’s not so structured and it’s more of an autonomous...well its structured just not so rigid with strict rules” (Betty). The option of choice gives the participants ownership

within their learning and makes parents/guardians comfortable that their children's engagement in CMP will be advantageous.

## MEANING CONDENSATION

### *Expanding social world*

For the first few years of life, most children's world consists mainly of immediate family members. Enrolment in programs and attendance at school expands the child's social world allowing the child to meet new individuals and develop additional relationships. It is beneficial to enrol a child in a program prior to the first years of school, as it allows him or her to get used to interacting with different people, listening to instructions and engaging in a new environment.

A mother shares her feelings on the need for her children to interact with people besides herself and her husband, and how beneficial it is to observe other viewpoints:

- "I just like it, when they are exposed to different things. That they get to see things other than what Mommy and Daddy do, which just isn't enough" (Diana).
- "I think it's important to have other relationships form and have others interact with them, because they need to learn to listen to other people" (Diana).

Children's fears are similar to adults in the realm of their world. Children's worries may seem small and insignificant in comparison to the world at large however they are comparable in size to the dimensions of their world. For example, a mother talks about how it is more difficult to join the environment on Saturday as opposed to the peers they see each day at school, whereas adults may be nervous to give a presentation to a potential client, or go to a board meeting contrasting to the coworkers they see everyday "Also, it introduces new peers because really ultimately its meeting new people because

the kids at school that are literally with all day so they get used to them, but it is nice that you guys have them do that again each Saturday because not that they are strangers but they have to be a lot braver to stand up in front of that group of people that those they are with Monday to Friday” (Jenna). Making friends is often difficult, especially when children don’t have the opportunity to interact with peers or in a social environment. A father comments on how enrolment in CMP provided his son with the opportunity for pals, “He didn’t have a lot of playmates where he was growing up of his age anyway, so it helped him have someone to play with” (John). Engaging in an unknown environment and meeting new people expands a child’s knowledge about human characteristics thereby expanding their experiences and community. Another father voices his opinion on his daughters learning to interact with new people, “[w]e have always really encouraged the kids to be social and by that I mean learning to be with people that they don’t know and understand that it can be safe and you know mom and dad are nearby and it is ok to play with different kids and learn about other different kids” (Anthony).

The atmosphere that CMP creates is cooperative, and a mother discusses one of her goals for enrolment was having her daughter learn to work as a group, “just to develop social skills and use her muscles, and be independent, but I don’t mean be independent of the kids, I want her to be able to play as a team and mesh with the kids rather than being on her own” (Rachel). Engaging children in an environment with others in which they do not interact with on a consistent basis often brings out different attitudes and actions; children are more likely to be on their best behaviour in the presence of unfamiliar people. A parent comments on how enrolment in the program forces his daughter to compromise and work with others, “It is a very good environment for them. Anything

that get's them out. Like I said I think the worst thing you can do it not get them into anything. And in the house it is easy for them to become the boss" (Anthony). The option for social interaction in a child's world is also conducive to the area they live in. Most children tend to socialize with peers from their street or individuals they meet from other extracurricular activities, which usually draws people from the surrounding areas. The Children's Movement Program draws from a bigger geographical area such as Welland, Niagara-on-the-lake, Thorold and even Niagara Falls, which expand the social network available. Through informal conversations, parents/guardians have indicated that they make the drive to Brock because there is not a program offered like the Children's Movement Program offered in their area. For example, a mother indicates that "the gravitation was that it was in a gym, we have an arena here [Niagara-on-the-lake] and with the arena there is a lot of emphasis on hockey and skating" (Raelyn). A parent who does live in the area commented on how he likes the bigger geographical draw to allow his children to meet others outside the area.

They play soccer, so there are the soccer kids. You know the birthday parties as a rule are almost exclusively kids who go to the school. It expands the social circle. They get to meet kids they won't necessarily meet anywhere else because I don't know this for a fact but I'm pretty sure CMP draws from a much bigger geographical area than the school will or fall soccer would or even when they took skating lesson at Fulton arena so you really are running into the same kids over and over again so it is really nice to expose them to other kids (Anthony).

Another feature of the Children's Movement Program that is beneficial for the participants and an attractive feature for parents is the opportunity for oral

communication and face-to-face interaction. With the heavy use of technology in the present era, the program provides a venue and experience for human interaction, rather than technological communication. A father states his disappointment with the way the world has become so dependent of mechanical equipment “As I mentioned earlier, [my daughter] has been in CMP longer than she has been in school. So it helped with the social. Unfortunately with the modern era we will call it, the best way to put it is being the Internet age and the cable age where nothing happens in the world and you can’t see it in 10 minutes it is taking some of the interest of out the world” (Anthony).

It is the downfall of technology that children have the opportunity to shy away from peer interaction. The emergence of electronic technology has become a significant part of today’s society. There has been much advancement within the technological realm that has made contact with others easier but at the expense of forming personal relationships within the real world. The inclusion of technology has changed the way that individuals interact with their peers, as well as their ability to function within the social order. Technology has detracted from face to face interaction and has encouraged children to network together through the means of computerized forms of communicating. Moreover, the dominance of electronic technology is fundamentally altering the competence of children to live successfully in their physical environment. If a child only knows how to interact through means of technology face to face contact will be intimidating and daunting.

Kraut, Patterson, Lundmark, Kiesler, Mukopadhyay and Scherlis (1998) discuss the idea of an Internet Paradox: “A Social Technology that Reduces Social Involvement [. . .]”, thus indicating that the ultimate goal of the Internet is to enhance social

development when actually it is hindering one's involvement socially in the physical environment. (p.1017). Researchers and social critics are debating whether Internet is improving or harming participation in community life and social relationships and concluded that greater use of the Internet was associated with declines in participant's communication with family members in the household, declines in size of their social circle and increases in their depression and loneliness (Kraut et al., 1998). The constant use of the Internet for a means of communication is decreasing the need for individuals to develop life skills and venture out of the safe realm of the computer room and engage in the material world. Moreover, if a child spends the majority of his or her time communicating via technological means, their social skills will be insufficient to engage in an oral conversation.

The concept of time displacement is a contributing factor to a child's withdrawal from the physical environment due to the dominance of electronic technology because the time that would be spent in the physical environment developing social ties is now spent in front of an electronic device.

### *Loving Movement*

A goal for instructors and educators is to have children engage in a movement experience that fosters a love for activity, developing lifelong movers. The goal for parents for their children's engagement in physical activity may be more specific that just to develop adoration for movement. A father expresses his want for his son's participation in CMP, and other community-based program, "We have him enrolled in a variety of programs, and that's mainly why we're doing it, for the social aspect. That's where it shows most for him" (Dennis). Often times the program gets recommended by



other practitioners for children who need to work on certain domains, or need an environment to practice certain skills. A mother expresses why she enrolled her daughter in the program 2 years earlier, “They told me it would be good for her growth and development and there were a lot of yourselves to children, the ratio was good. And it was good for her social skills. Back at the time she was being treated for OT/PT and speech and language (Rachel).

*Transferability – “I think it reinforces what they have learned elsewhere” (Anthony)*

During the childhood years, children can engage in many different setting. A large part of a child’s time is spent in the school classroom and while where a child learns a certain ability cannot always be pinpointed the partaking numerous situations provides the opportunity to practice and further develop learned knowledge and skills. A mother supports this notion with her comment, “I think it reinforces what they learn all week at school, so I’m not sure if it introduces the concepts but it is definitely another opportunity to practice them and implement it” (Jenna). The program can also act a precursor for acclimatizing children to a structure yet to be experienced. The enrolment in CMP allows a child to be exposed to some of the similar structures they will engage in at school. A parent states how she believes it contributed to her son’s success in earlier years, “[t]hey need to listen to instructions from others. I think when they are about preschool age it helps get them ready with circle time and group settings” (Diana). Another parent voices her desire for her two son’s to actively engage in the structure play portion to learn some of the skills needed in other environments “I always tried to push them to actually get involved in the introduction portion of it, because you want them to know that they have

to sometimes sit down and listen and they have to what people are telling them to, it was a big learning thing” (Molly).

The program has choice for children as to how to respond to a movement challenge, what type of equipment or apparatus to manipulate however there is structure in the rules of safe play. A mother comments on how the program develops a child develop socially, but also how to act appropriately within the setting, “It definitely has the social aspect, and to start at an early age to learn like sharing and taking turns, the social concepts of playing and like the etiquette playing. Like you have to wait your turn you can’t just charge the equipment, there is a structure with other people” (Jenna). Many parents commented on the social skills in which they noticed in their children when acting as observers of the program:

- “He is better at listening to instructions” (Erin).
- “He seems to interact better with children” (John).
- “Helping the kids learn to focus on direction” (John).
- “I like seeing that he actually listens” (Molly).
- “I think he initiates conversation more, playing with kids, he’s more able to do that now, join in the group and stuff” (Angela).
- “I think it’s great for her social skills, communication with other children, and playing, learning to share, cooperation” (Rachel).
- “I have to say I think this program in particular helps broaden his experience,[. . .] he gets out and he has to use social skills, he’s waiting, listening is key and taking turns. I think this program helps him in many of those ways, it has helped build his confidence” (Betty & Brett).

### *Maximum participation*

The time spent on task and the duration of the program spent engaged in actual activity is significant to instructors and parents. A program should offer maximum participation to all participants, avoiding waiting in line and equal opportunity for all participants to be engaged and successful. According to Williams (1994), extremely low participation factors can place an activity into the Physical Education Hall of Shame, which was established to identify activity programs or games while are physically demanding, do not contribute to the development of cognitive or affective skills of participants. A few participants make comments about other program that did not satisfy the maximum participation goal:

- Referring to another program she was enrolled in “you got one bounce on it and then you have to wait in line again” (Iris).
- When referring to another program, Games Galore, he expressed his dislike for dodge ball “No, and I never get the ball either” (Leah).
- [When discussing previous engagement in soccer] “I didn’t like it because I never got the ball, I like CMP because I always get to participate” (Adam).

A parent comments on how CMP provides an environment providing all participants with the opportunity for assistance and a high level of involvement. She recalls an earlier experience with another community-based program that resulted in a low level of participation and her dissatisfaction.

I also like that there is a lot of staff so the kids get a lot of individual attention and help and interaction which is also a good thing because with a lot of these things, I think we tried karate at one point and there was one instructor for twelve kids

and they had to wait everyone's whole turn before they got another turn, which I think is a drag because they spend most of their time standing there so it wasn't very good (Raelyn).

*Indirect Learning - "[CMP] is a healthy energetic gathering of people doing activities and learning skills" (John).*

The program provides a fun and exciting atmosphere for the participants, but in disguise teaches knowledge and skills. A goal of all programs should be for the participants to have fun, but the target of a quality program is for learning *and* fun. Any program can create the experience of 'busy, happy, fun', but the difference between a good and a great program is what the participants can take away from the experience. A parent's comment contends to the idea that CMP is great! "I've recommended CMP to a couple people, and that was mostly the reasons because they learn something and took something away from it" (Molly). While the children are learning things, it is proposed in a fun manner to feel as if they are not being instructed, but engaging in play. A father shares his view on the learning that secretly occurs, "She makes it fun for them, she actually teaches when they don't know they are being taught, and that's why I think it's just a success. Some days if you look and pay attention you see that they are learning a dance, but the instructors make it so fun, they have no idea they are in class for an hour" (Brett).

Many of the children in the interviews commented about disliking other programs for that fact that they had to work when they attended, for example swimming laps wasn't fun or they did not want to run in gym class. However when they attend the Children's Movement Program it was a different experience, "In gym you have to do something

specific, where in CMP you can ride a scooter, play hide and go seek, and do what you choose. It doesn't feel like she's instructing you, it feels more like you are playing with a friend" (Iris). Similarly, parents view the program in a similar fashion, "[t]he unique thing about this program is that they do learn things but in the fun structure, it's not like instruction" (Betty). A father also recounts the fight he has with his children transferring from Gym 2 to the swimming pool, "After we come out of there, they say 'I don't want to go swimming, I don't want to go swimming', there is a huge difference in going to swimming, it's very rigid and for them its three quarters of an hour they make them work. He comes out of the program sweating and has almost run a mile, but he doesn't know it, he does 10 times the amount in there that he does in swimming, but they don't even know it" (Brett).

### *Sampling Activities*

The Children's Movement Program curriculum includes a variety of skills. As indicated earlier, the focus is on cooperative games, educational gymnastics and creative dance; the program offers a chance to experience and try as assortment of activities rather than a heavy focus on one specific interest. Many community-based programs focus on a particular activity allowing the participant to experience only one type of activity. There has been much debate as to the advantages and disadvantages of early specialization or sampling of activity in a child's elementary school years. The availability of experiencing a range of activities within the single program of CMP is an enticing feature for some parents "I wanted them to be in something that they are active but be exposed to a wider variety of activities" (Raelyn). A positive element that has been linked to sampling activities in the early years is prolonged engagement in activity; sampling activities in

childhood was associated with being physically active during adulthood. Furthermore, sampling was associated with enjoyment in the activities whereas early specialization was focused on skill development with a large amount of deliberate practice taking away from the enjoyment aspect (Cote, Horton, Macdonald & Wilkes, 2009). The sampling of activities also demonstrates a more favourable promotion of pro-social behaviour and positive peer relationship than those participating in fewer activities (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006). In perspective of the Children's Movement Program, the sampling of activities has provided several children with the interest in further perusing some of the activities attempted, while others participated in activities surprising their parents in their willingness to try. For example a mother states "he expressed an interest in gymnastics, based on CMP, he really likes the balance beam and ropes" (Diana). Additionally, another mother expresses, "He does stuff that I didn't think he would do, such as even just like the dancing" (Molly).

### *Atmosphere*

Many parents hope that their children will go on to postsecondary school. It is the child's ability to perceive him or her in that atmosphere that will be a contributing factor to the success or demise of that goal. The fact that the Children's Movement Program runs in the venue of a university assists with the children being comfortable in a postsecondary institution and perhaps in turn will encourage these children in years to come to attend university or college. Brock University is a multifaceted place and many of the program's participants utilize the spot for more than CMP. Numerous of the participants are enrolled in other activities at Brock, such as swimming and summer camps. It is the continuous engagement within the atmosphere that makes the children

feel comfortable in the Brock environment. Attending the Children's Movement Program year after year gives the child more confidence in his or her surroundings making the participant feel more at home. A mother commented on an advancement in her son from the previous CMP session, "I noticed from last year that he participates more in the big group activities and that could be an age thing, but before he just kind of went through the motions, now it could be he is less self conscious" (Diana). Additionally, some families attend Brock on Saturday's and make a day of the experience, beginning with the program, advancing to swimming and stopping off at the cafeteria for lunch. A father explains his family's Saturday agenda "'Let's put it this way, when we come here on Saturday, it's a day out, we do lunch and it's a nice day out for us. This program has it all, it has the social skills, it's after a long stressful week at school, it lets them unwind and then they get a bite of pizza in this atmosphere because they love it here" (Brett). Although it may appear that Brock is a second home for all the students and faculty, but it has also proven to be a comfortable atmosphere for many community members.

#### *"Alternative" Movement Experience*

The experience at the Children's Movement Program is a cooperative in nature, whereas many other movement experiences can be considered competitive. Other programs focus on competitive play "where two or more children compete to win – for example in team sports, relays and other competitive challenges" (Shipley, 1998, p.41). The competitive atmosphere develops a culture of its own and can teach values that are not inherently good, or foster a dislike for activity due to a negative experience or feelings of inferiority in a situation. The Children's Movement Program provides flexibility to meet all children's strengths, while providing opportunity to work on

weaknesses without being centered out. A father indicates that CMP is the only program his son voluntarily wants to attend, “We can’t get him to do anything, he doesn’t want to swim, he doesn’t want to do baseball, he doesn’t want to do soccer, he doesn’t want to do team sports because I don’t think he doesn’t want to be the one who’s not fantastic, where at this he fully just blends in and has fun” (Brett). The enrolment in a specialized program can often lead to children feeling pressure to be the best and have to excel within the chosen activity, thereby feeling pressure during participation rather than fun. Some parents of the program offer their opinions of competitive programs:

- I think parents today are so concerned with getting their kids in sports early so they can be the best instead of putting them into it because it is good for them and to have fun, its making kids like being active” (Sheila).
- “I avoid organized sport, we have tried soccer, but it’s too chaotic or the skills it not known and it’s frustrating and there isn’t enough time for one on one instruction” (Angela).
- “I firmly believe that kids are pushed into game situations too early in life, I don’t think they can cognitively or socially handle it at that age, I think one kid will dominate whether they are the best or the fastest or the most aggressive, I don’t feel the other kids get a chance, if they are a little on the timid side they really don’t get a chance” (Sheila).

Parents also provide their comments on why they choose the Children’s Movement Program over competitive sport programs:

- “This is a great activity for children that is less structured than let’s say soccer or any other team sports” (Betty).



- “Because it was no pressure and fun” (Jenna).
- “That’s what I like, you are working among peers, and unlike other organizations that say you know it’s YOUR turn and its very all eyes are on them, where here there isn’t that” (Jenna).

## MEANING INTERPRETATION

Creating the optimal experience for learning can be difficult as teaching children is tremendously complex due to the many factors that need to be considered to meet the needs of all individuals, as well as the many options available in terms of pedagogical strategies. There are endless options that instructors and teachers may employ to construct effective learning experiences for the participants.

The previous research themes can be infused into the curricular components of teaching content, pedagogy and learning context because each plays a paramount role in enabling the child’s social development. For example if the instructor says; “Travel across the mat with your partner” this allows each child to make a decision. This range provides social opportunities for the child offering a variety of movement possibilities within particular equipment and apparatus, as opposed to each child on a soccer team dribbling the ball up the field around a set of pylons being observed to be inadequate by peers. This can be socially impeding. ‘Content’ is referred to as the material to be learned or the desired outcome for the learner. ‘Pedagogy’ refers to the method or the process in which the student will engage. ‘Context’ refers to the environment in which the experience occurs. It is recommended that teacher’s consider the range of possibilities in each component to maximize for its potential in lesson construction. The following sections will explain each component in detail and followed by a visual representation.

The figure has the potential to have the research themes relate to each component of content, pedagogy and context. For example the theme of 'loving movement' can relate to the learning context as in; "I love moving along a bench" or the learning content as in; "I love learning the skill of rolling" or in relation to the pedagogy, where each child can find his or her best movement while working with peers.

### *Content*

The content that is included in the Children's Movement Program refers to the movement form in which the child engages; cooperative games, creative dance and educational gymnastics. These movement forms offer different learning opportunities and experiences for social development. All games have a method of scoring and a purpose of achieving a winning score. It is imperative to consider that different forms of games can produce a highly competitive to a minimally competitive nature. This is very important for the teachers to consider as they need to teach to the participant's needs and stage of development. For example, for children just learning a skill, a high level of competition would not be suitable. Dance is joyous and is often movement for the sake of moving or to communicate ideas or feelings to others. For example, folk dance is a form which dominates in social relationships. Ballroom dance entails melding one's movement into a harmony with a partner and with the music. Dance would appear to offer an experience in cooperation. Gymnastics is unique in its use of apparatus and equipment, as well as how the body manipulates these objects. Gymnastics allows children to become aware of their bodies capabilities and be self-testing in terms of body management (Stanley, 1969).

Integrated within all of these movement forms are movement concepts and fundamental movement skills. The movement concepts are body awareness, space

awareness, effort quality and relationships. Examples of fundamental movement skills are running, jumping, rolling, throwing and kicking. The elements of gymnastics, dance and games are the vehicle to allow for the smaller fundamental skills to be shaped. Numerous skills can be focused on within each movement form by simply changing the skill; the lesson then takes a new direction. Additionally, outside the CMP environment, examples of content may be soccer, fencing or swimming all which would create a different experience for the participants. Also, included at CMP is the use of movement themes such as body shapes or body parts outlined within the movement education approach. The program also uses weekly children's themes such as 'Western Welcome' to allow the children to start the class with a familiar and concrete idea. c. The movement and weekly themes change for each Saturday, varying the material being taught and thereby changing the movement experience.

### *Pedagogy*

The pedagogy component of the learning experience refers to how the child is instructed. How the instructor conveys the tasks and feedback to the participants whether using a direct teaching approach, a guided discovery or one of the many other teaching styles is included in this component. The types of directions and tasks administered by the instructors is also an element that has options; for example are the tasks open-ended or closed-ended, how are the instructions phrased; are they asked in a question form? Present in the Children's Movement Program pedagogical approach is an atmosphere where problem solving is encouraged through collaboration and sharing, as well as a non-competitive approach. Also established at CMP is choice within the tasks, for example a choice within the equipment used or what type of locomotion to use when asked to travel

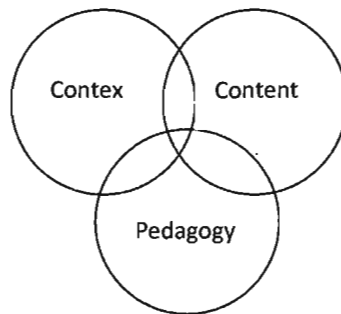
across the gymnasium, as well as the development of an inclusive program. The program is learner-centered, making the structure and pedagogical decisions focused on what is best for the individual. These elements are what are used as pedagogical strategies within the Children's Movement Program, but can be altered to create a dissimilar experience depending on the intended outcome.

### *Context*

The context of a movement experience consists of the environment in which the activity takes place. For example, the gymnasium is the context for the Children's Movement Program. However, the options for what constitutes the learning environment are numerous. The activity could occur outside on a field or playground, on a skating rink, in a swimming pool or many other various locations. Additionally, the context refers to the relationship with what and with whom. The equipment and apparatus that is included in the activity provides the relationship of 'with what' and can always be altered to change the skill and experience or to suit the participants' abilities. Equipment alterations can be as simple as changing the weight, size or texture of a ball to varying the item completely such as changing the jumping environment from a line to a bench. The 'with whom' relationship refers to the organization of participants during the activity, working individually, in partner or in groups.

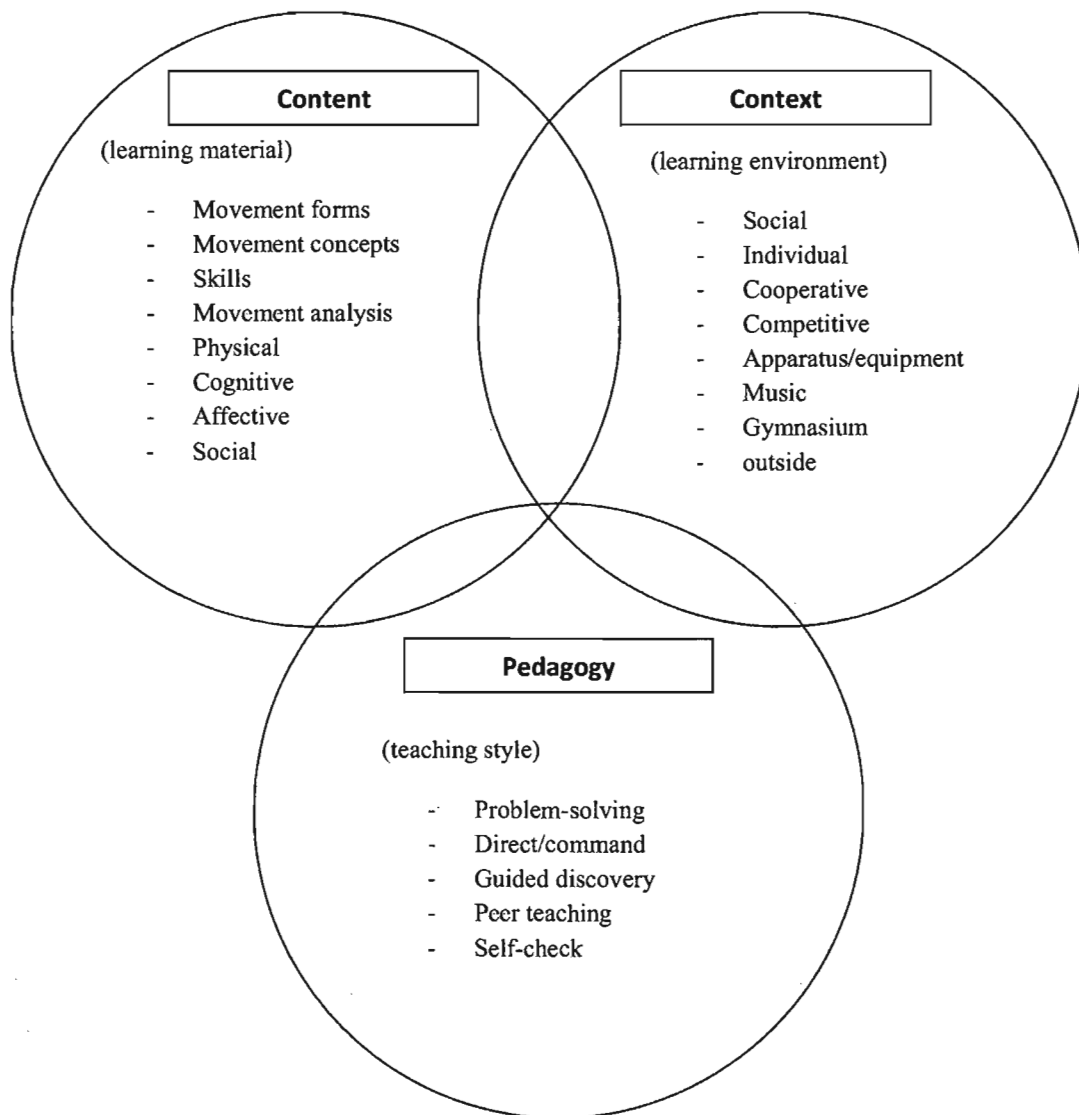
### *Conclusion*

These components, content, pedagogy and context, can be seen as a Venn Diagram displaying the relationship amongst the categories that comprise the foundation for the learner's movement experience. The intersecting portion highlights that all three components are always present and must be seriously considered for the learner.



To summarize each component contains many diverse elements that can be altered to construct new lesson material when a teacher possesses the knowledge to change one of the components, a new lesson can be offered allowing the learner to transfer skills from previous lessons. This illustrates that skills can be used in a multitude of ways not merely in isolation (e.g. swinging a baseball bat to swinging a cricket bat). This figure expands the educational options for teachers and instructors and assists in eliminating repetition in curriculum delivery. An example for creating options for teachers could be to change the content from a roll to a jump, change the pedagogy from command to peer teaching and change the context from the gymnasium to an outside field.

Figure 1.



## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The chapter will summarize the social development findings of children aged five to nine occurring in the Children's Movement Program and suggest possibilities for future research.

As previously stated, community-based programs that focus on physical activity have the possibility to meet the requirements of the all domains within the "whole child", specifically social development. Sport and movement activities offer instructors many opportunities to model and encourage positive socialization in children (Gallahue, 1993). However, it is the structure and nature of the program that promotes or discourages children's social development.

#### *Learner Centered*

A learning setting should be structured to foster the learning of all children regardless of their abilities; it should not require the learner conform to meet the situation within the setting. A learner centered educational experience is designed so that children select activities, pursue movement responses in their own ways, set their own goals and decide when they have finished. The teachers and instructors encourage children to assume responsibility for their own learning within the planned environment (Shipley, 1998). When the learners can be successful in the activity they will become more confident in their ability to then further challenge themselves. It is the choice, maximum opportunity for participation, encouragement from peers observing others and the opportunity to explore movement responses at one's own pace that makes the learning individualized. These desirable characteristics of constructivist physical education are

what fosters the child's love for physical activity and creates positive socialization among participants.

#### *Cooperative environment*

One of the major challenges that teachers and instructors face is how to engage all students in the learning process at the same time, without allowing one or a few students to dominate the interaction and learning opportunities. Cooperative learning allows children to learn together with all members working towards a common goal (Metzler, 2000). The cooperative environment provides individual accountability due to all students having to contribute to the group's efforts. This creates a setting where there is equal opportunity for success because each child contributes in a way that is possible for him or her. This environment allows students to interact with each other eliminating feelings of isolation or inferiority. The Children's Movement Program is a cooperative environment using problem-solving and decision-making skills as the foundation for the participants. The program often organizes the children into groups to encourage interaction and team work within the environment; providing tasks which support working together and collaboration. For example, task cards may be handed out that direct the children to create a static balance as a group or touch all the benches in the area while travelling as a squad.

#### *Movement is Meaningful*

The movement experiences that children engage in should be meaningful to them, allowing the experience to enhance their learning and understanding. At the moment of birth a baby expresses his or her needs and feelings through movement. As he or she gets older, movement is used as a means of learning about oneself and the physical world. In a



search for experience, movement is a child's primary medium of action. As the child evolves into an adult, movement plays a principal role in the pressures and impulses of life. Movement can be viewed as a means of communication, another form of language expressed through actions rather than the use of words. Movement is the unremarkable attendant of an individual's daily life (Department of Education and Science, 1972).

Creative activities and social and recreational pursuits are important within an increasingly face-paced way of life. It is within games, gymnastics, and dance that there are opportunities for children to channel their aggression, satisfy social needs and relieve emotional stresses in creative and recreational pursuits. Movement is inherent in everyday life and although we may not always recognize the role it plays in communicating with each other, movement is always prevalent. Children love to move, they love to learn. As we observe children playing on a playground or within a program, we see that they move with total involvement (Wall & Murray, 1994). Movement can provide sheer enjoyment for a child; it is the sole pleasure of moving around which lights up that child's face with a smile. The excitement children display when learning a new movement is invaluable, as they cannot wait to show someone their new found accomplishment. Because movement is the very nature of being human, it is vitally important that all children have the opportunity to move to learn and learn to move (Wall & Murray, 1994). It is the responsibility of educators to provide these opportunities and enriching experiences that foster worthwhile skills and a love and appreciation for movement that will be last throughout their lives.

*Current state of Physical Activity Programs*

In January 2010, the Revised Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8 for Health and Physical Education was published with the anticipation that all health and physical education program in September of 2010 will be based upon the expectations outlined in the new document. This revised health and physical education curriculum is based on the vision that the knowledge and skills acquired through the curriculum will benefit students throughout their lives by enabling them to acquire physical and health literacy and to develop the comprehension, capacity and commitment needed to lead healthy active lives (HPE curriculum, 2010).

The curriculum is divided into three strands: active living, movement competence and healthy living with living skills infused within all the strands. The movement competence strand is designed to help students develop movement abilities. These abilities are needed so that students can participate in physical activities as they develop movement skills and apply relevant movement concepts and movement strategies. The development of fundamental movement skills and transferable skills are the focus of the learning in this strand.

In the current youth population there have been many issues that are identified as risk factors that comprise the health of our future generation. There are many agencies and foundations that are trying to raise awareness and provide solutions for these challenges.

Active Healthy Kids Canada creates an annual report reflecting on the many issues impacting the physical activity levels of young people in Canada. The report card highlights that only 23 percent of schools have a trained physical educator teaching

physical education. Also, the report card indicates that only 50 percent of children express participating in unorganized sport. Regional information shows that 1/3 of youth indicate doing no physical activity as part of their free time and 60 percent of youth with disabilities report that they seldom or never play games with friends in their free time. Programs such as the Children's Movement Program which contribute to children's joy of movement and foster positive development create an environment optimal for maximizing the benefits of physical activity. CMP is a model program which addresses issues such as differing abilities in population, lack of interest in organized sport, an opportunity to build a movement repertoire and a setting to interact with peers. Research should investigate principles of CMP as applied to other activity programs.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario has created the *Spark Together for Healthy Kids* initiative in response to the growing epidemic of childhood obesity. The initiative is designed to address childhood obesity by inspiring individuals, families, communities, businesses, industry and government to spark collective change in how we live, how we act, and how we think to create a brighter future for the child population. More specifically, the Spark initiative created a fund for community groups to use to promote and create sustainable physical activity and healthy eating opportunities in their own communities (Heart & Stroke Spark Together for Healthy Kids pamphlet, 2010).

The Physical literacy initiative by PHE Canada and the 2010 Ontario Curriculum provides children the tools to take part in physical activity and sport for both healthy life-long enjoyment and movement success. Physical literacy is the development of fundamental movement skills and fundamental sport skills that permit a child to move confidently and competently within a wide range of physical activity, rhythmic and sport

situations (Developing Physical Literacy pamphlet, n.d.). Physical literacy also includes the individual's ability to 'read' what is going on around him or her in an activity setting and react appropriately to those instances. A key factor that is highlighted in the physical literacy document is that numerous sports have recognized that many of the children and youth who enter their programs lack basic movements. It is the realization that children are failing to develop the fundamentals of movement prior to attempting to move onto more specialized skills which can assist in eliminating "children tell[ing] us that not hav[ing] the skills to play is one major reason they drop out of physical activity and organized sport" (Developing Physical Literacy pamphlet, n.d., p.6). These are three specific examples of programs that could benefit from this research conducted on social development of primary-aged children.

*An answer to the challenges and future research*

The Children's Movement Program can draw a parallel to the current 2010 Health and Physical Education curriculum with a focus on the development of fundamental and transferable skills, as well as allowing children to develop an understanding of the abilities and components needed to lead a healthy active lifestyle. The CMP curriculum is based on the same movement concepts as the revised 2010 HPE curriculum: body awareness, space awareness, effort awareness and relationships. The program provides an opportunity for children to utilize the skills learned in school in another environment, displaying the transferability of these concepts. Children can apply these movement concepts and principles to expand their movement repertoire. . Programs such as CMP can contribute to the solution of the poor grades received on the Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth 2009, as the program is taught by students currently

enrolled in a relevant university program, as well as provides children of all abilities a venue to participate in during their free time. Furthermore, the Children's Movement Program creates a 'spark' for the Heart and Stroke foundation as the program is a sustainable physical activity opportunity in the Niagara community. Lastly, the curriculum of the Children's Movement Program which uses the philosophy of movement education teaches children movement concepts and skills creating physically literate children. The program has children work on and develop the fundamental skills that will later be applied to fundamental sports skills; the mastering of the basic skills will lead to a more capable mover for future physical activity opportunities.

### *Summary and Conclusion*

To instil a change in the methods used to implement physical activity, physical education and sport would be to alter the nature of these programs and eradicate the negativity associated with the competitive sport program. The competitive sport program may exclude children, allows the child who may not be superior in ability to be left on the sidelines and may include rules and outcomes that are developmentally inappropriate. The philosophy of a program should facilitate the development of the whole child. While this may seem impossible, professionals can take one step at a time and first address the lack of specialists with knowledge of optimal teaching and learning techniques in order to utilize physical activity, physical education and sport to their full potential. The success of these changes will assist in altering the current viewpoint and status of these programs in hopes of creating a more progressive advancement. A program that has attempted to address this issue is the Children's Movement Program. This is a program designed to ensure that children receive the most positive experience

possible from physical activity. The focus of this program is on learning the fundamental skills before entering into more sport-specific activities and on providing an opportunity for children to have positive life-long experiences in activity. Physical activity, physical education and sport have the capacity to develop life skills. As long as we work towards focusing our efforts on developmentally appropriate challenges, rather than focusing on children's specific skill acquisition, the programs will foster positive child development.

One goal of developmental physical education, as well as of all effective teaching, is to influence the process of children's socialization. Helping children learn about, experience, and adopt socially appropriate behaviours can help to facilitate valuable social skills. Gallahue and Donnelly (2003) and Morris (1976) indicate that socialization is a learned behaviour that can be modified and improved, especially during childhood. This implies that physical activity, physical education and sport are a prime opportunities for positive social development. Byra (2006) writes that there needs to be a more eclectic understanding of teaching styles beyond 'one' (p. 462). This supports the need to use a variety of teaching approaches; using the style which best fits the situation and learning outcome.

Furthermore, the revisiting of the concepts that constitute movement education can assist with all of these ambitions; one can see that movement education offers an environment inclusive for all; providing movement challenges that are developmentally appropriate, while making the focus child-centered. This atmosphere allows for the development of the whole child in a positive light.

Future research should investigate theoretical tenets of movement education and pursue practical application of its framework in various movement settings. Taking these

concepts and applying them within other community-based programs would provide a beneficial foundation for other movement opportunities and other options for how children can spend their free time. The development of movement literacy in children provides them with the necessary foundation to lead successful, active lives which will contribute not only to the present generation but future ones as well.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Parental Consent Form for Child Observation**

Project Title: A case study of Brock University's Children's Movement Program examining social development of primary aged children.

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#### **INVITATION**

The Children's Movement Program (CMP) is a reputable program that is now running successfully in its 16<sup>th</sup> year. Andrea Roberts as part of her BA PHED Honours program first established this program in 1993 when she wanted to view how well movement education worked with young children. This program allows the knowledge of movement education to be presented to children of various ages. For the purpose of this study the researcher will evaluate if the Children's Movement Program has an effect of the social development of the children as a result of participating in this community-based program. I would like to invite your child to participate in the study.

#### **WHAT'S INVOLVED**

The research will take place for the duration of the CMP session, in which you have enrolled your child in. I will collect information on the social development of the children in the program. This will involve me watching the activities and interactions of the program and recording what the children are doing by note taking. I will watch different children at different times and the children will not know if or when they are being watched. Also, I will set up a time to interview you and your child together to ask questions regarding the Children's Movement Program.

#### **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Also, if you decide your child can be in the study now but later change your mind, he or she can leave the study. If you do not want your child to participate in the study, there will be no penalties. Your child will still be able to participate in all aspects of the program, as well as any other programs offered at Brock University.

#### **POTENTIAL RISKS AND BENEFITS**

By participating in the study, your child can provide information that helps CMP to continue its existence at Brock University and perhaps begin the same program at another venue. There are no known or anticipated risks associated with participation in this study.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

The information about your child will be kept confidential. His or her name will not appear in any publication or presentation resulting from this study. Access to the material will be restricted to the principal investigator and the faculty supervisor.

**PUBLICATION OF RESULTS**

Results of this study may be published and presented at conferences. Feedback about this study will be available. If you would like a copy of the results you may provide your email address at the end of this letter. The results will be available by September 2010.

**CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE**

If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact the Principal Investigator using the contact information provided above. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance by the Research Ethics Board at Brock University. If you have any comments or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics Office at (905) 688-5550 Ext. 3035, reb@brocku.ca.

**CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

I agree to allow my child to participate in this study described above. I made this decision based on the information I have read in this letter. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and I know that I can ask more questions in the future. I know that I may change my mind and withdraw consent at any time.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Child's Age on September 1, 2009 \_\_\_\_\_

By checking the box below, I allow my child to participate in the following components of the study:

☐ Observation of child for the duration of the current enrolment of the Children's Movement Program

Name of Parent or Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent or Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your assistance in this project! Please keep a copy of this form**

**Appendix B**  
**Letter of Invitation**

Project Title: A case study of Brock University's Children's Movement Program examining social development of primary aged children.

Principal Investigator:

**Ashley Johnson**

MA Candidate

Brock University

aj03bw@brocku.ca

Co-Investigator:

**Nancy Francis**

nfrancis@brocku.ca

Date: August, 2009

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

Thank you for your enrolment in the Children's Movement Program, this letter is an invitation for you to participate in our research study to better understand how this movement education program effects your child(ren)'s social development.

As a participant, you will be asked to verbally respond to interview questions pertaining to how you view your child(ren)'s involvement in the Children's Movement Program, as well as other contributing factors to your child(ren)'s social development. The interview will be audio taped to ensure that your words are captured accurately. Please be aware that some direct quotations may be included in presentations or publications with your permission. These direct quotes will be anonymous and will be carefully scrutinized to ensure that you are not identifiable. Participation will take approximately 60 minutes of your time. If you are interested, shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish. This review of the transcript may take up to one hour. I anticipate that your total time commitment will total 2 hours.

I would like you to know that the information you provide will be kept confidential. Your name will not appear in any publication or presentation resulting from this study; however anonymous quotations may be used. Audio tapes will be kept until you have had the opportunity to review the written transcription of our interview after which time it will be erased. Access to the written transcription, stripped of all identifying names, will be restricted to the principal investigator and the faculty supervisor. You may withdraw from the study at any time by simply notifying the researcher. Withdrawal from the study carries no penalty. Also, participating in the research is not mandatory and not participating will not affect your child's involvement in the program in any way.

Report on the findings will be available September 2010 in the James A. Gibson Library, or by request.

This project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board (File #REB08323) at Brock University. We will be happy to answer any questions that you have about the project. In the event you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this study, please contact the University Research Ethics Officer at 905-688-5550, Ext. 3035.

If you are interested in participating please contact me at [aj03bw@brocku.ca](mailto:aj03bw@brocku.ca) and I can provide you with further information and consent forms, also feel free to e-mail me if you have any further questions.

Thank you for considering this invitation.

Sincerely,

Ashley Johnson

## **Appendix C**

### **Parental Interview Consent Form**

Project Title: Social Development of Primary Aged Children through a Movement Education Program

Principal Investigator:

**Ashley Johnson**

MA Candidate

Faculty of Applied Health Sciences

Brock University

aj03bw@brocku.ca

Co-Investigators:

**Nancy Francis**

nfrancis@brocku.ca

#### **INVITATION**

You are invited as a parent/guardian of a child in CMP to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to explore if children's participation in the Children's Movement Program contributes in a positive way to the development their social skills?

#### **WHAT'S INVOLVED**

As a participant, you will be asked to verbally respond to interview questions pertaining to how you view your child(ren)'s involvement in the Children's Movement Program, as well as other contributing factors to your child(ren)'s social development. The interview will extend to involve your child, with questions both directed towards you and your child. The interview will be audio taped to ensure that your words are captured accurately. Participation will take approximately 60 minutes of your time. If you are interested, shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish. This review of the transcript may take up to one hour.

#### **POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS**

Possible benefits of participation include reflection on the positive effects of your child(ren)'s enrolment in the Children's Movement Program, which can then be shared with others. There are no known or anticipated risks associated with participation in this study.

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The information you provide will be kept confidential. Your name will not appear in any publication or presentation resulting from this study; however anonymous quotations may be used. Audio tapes will be kept until you have had the opportunity to review the written transcription of our interview after which time it will be erased. Access to the written transcription will be restricted to the principal investigator and the faculty supervisor.

**VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you wish, you may decline to answer any questions or participate in any component of the study. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time and may do so without any penalty.

**PUBLICATION OF RESULTS**

Results of this study may be published and presented at professional conferences. Feedback about this study will be available. If you would like a copy of the results you may provide your email address at the end of this letter. The results will be available by September 2010.

**CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE**

If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact Ashley Johnson using the contact information provided above. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance by the Research Ethics Board at Brock University (File #REB08323). If you have any comments or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics Office at (905) 688-5550 Ext. 3035, reb@brocku.ca.

**Thank you for your assistance in this project!**

**CONSENT FORM**

I agree to participate in this study described above. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in the Information-Consent Letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask questions in the future. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time.

I agree to have my interview audio recorded. YES NO

I would like to review the transcription of the audio tape. YES NO

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any publication or presentation that results from this research. YES NO

I would like to receive a copy of the final results of this study. YES NO

If you would like to receive a copy by email please include it here:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## **Appendix D**

### **Parent Interview Guide**

1. How many years have you had (a) child(ren) enrolled in the Children's Movement Program?
2. How did you hear about the Children's Movement Program?
3. What characteristics of the Children's Movement Program enticed you to enrol your child(ren)?
4. Is this the first community-based program your child(ren) has attended?
5. What do you hope that your child will get out of being a participant in the Children's Movement Program?
6. What positive factors are associated with your child(ren)'s enrolment in the Children's Movement Program?
7. Can you highlight any major differences that you have viewed within your child since his or her enrolment in the Children's Movement Program?
8. Can you describe any changes in your child(ren)'s approach or eagerness to come to CMP on Saturday mornings?
9. Have you noticed any of the skills being developed in CMP transferring over to other settings or activities your child(ren) engages in? If so can you provide an example?
10. Has the enrolment in the Children's Movement Program contributed to the development of your son or daughters social skills? If so how?
11. Can you describe any changes in your child(ren)'s social connections after his or her (their) involvement in the program?
12. What were your child's reactions to the program? Did you notice any significant transformations in his or her interaction in a group setting?
13. Can you provide any anecdotal responses from your child about his or her like or dislike for the program?
14. How can the instructors contribute to fostering social skills within the program's participants? Is there anything specifically, that they do now which you feel are contributing factors?

15. If you were to give advice to new parents about the benefits of community-based programs, what would it be and why?
16. Is there any other feedback or comments you would like to provide about the program?

## Appendix E Enrolment Confirmation

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Thank you for registering your child in Brock University's Fall 2009 Children's Movement Program. We are looking forward to providing an exciting and educational program for your child this session.

The program begins on Saturday, September 20 and runs until Saturday November 15, with no class October 11. All sessions take place in Gym #2 of the Walker Complex (the building with the pool). Parents of children under two years of age are asked to actively participate with their child, while those with children over two years of age are encouraged to watch from the sidelines. Please keep in mind that children not registered in the program are required to remain on the sides of the gym with their parents or guardians.

Your child(ren), \_\_\_\_\_, is/are registered for the \_\_\_\_\_ session. We like the children to arrive five to ten minutes prior to the start of the program, appropriately dressed (T-shirt and shorts/sweatpants) and ready to move! As a safety precaution, children and adults participating in the program must remove their shoes. As well, CMP aims to provide a nut-free environment and we ask for your co-operation.

Please find enclosed your receipt and parking pass (if ordered in advance). If you registered by phone, please stop at the table outside Gym #2 on the morning of your first session to sign a parental consent form and pick up your receipt. We look forward to meeting you and your child! Maps to the Walker Complex at Brock University can be found at [www.brocku.ca/maps](http://www.brocku.ca/maps)

Sincerely,

Ashley Johnson

Children's Movement Program Curriculum Coordinator,  
905-688-5550, ext. 4060  
Depts. Of Recreation Services and PEKN

**Appendix F**  
**Participant Interview Guide**

1. How old are you?
2. What grade are you in?
3. What are your favourite things to do? Do you do them alone or with others?
4. Do you like school? What is your favourite subject?
5. Can you describe to me what you do in the Children's Movement Program (CMP)?
6. What have you learned from being in CMP?
7. What do you like about CMP?
8. What do you not like about CMP?
9. Have you made any new friends in CMP?
10. What do you think about the activities that you do in CMP?
11. Have you been in any other programs other than CMP? If so what?
12. Is CMP similar to your school gym class? What is the same? What is different? Are the teachers the same, in how they teach you?
13. Can you remember one event from CMP that you really really liked?

## **Appendix G**

### **Assent Form for Program Participants**

I am working on a project that looks at some of the benefits of the Brock University's Children's Movement Program (CMP) that you come to every Saturday morning. I am hoping that you will help me to complete my project by telling me what you think about the program by answering some of my questions.

#### **Who am I?**

My name is Ashley Johnson and I am a Masters student at Brock University in the Applied Health Sciences and Physical Education department. I have also been a part of the Children's Movement Program for the past 5 years.

#### **Why am I doing this study?**

I want to find out what you like and dislike about the program, things you have learned and if you have made any new friends in the program.

#### **What will happen to you if you are in the study?**

If you decide to take part in this study I will first watch everyone in the program on Saturday mornings and observe how you play with the other children and instructors. Secondly, I will set up another time with you and your parents to have an interview to ask you questions about CMP. While doing these things, all you have to do is try your best. If you have tried your best and do not know what to say, you can say, "I don't know" or ask to skip the question. All of your participation will take about 1 hour and 30 minutes; including both the program time and interview.

#### **Are there good things and bad things about the study?**

As far as I know, being in the study will not hurt you or make you feel bad. In fact, it will help me learn things that will improve CMP and help other children just like you.

#### **Who will know that you are in the study?**

The things you say and any information I write about you will not have your name with it, so no one will know they are your answers.

As the researcher I will not let anyone know your answers or any other information about you, except as required by mandatory reporting laws. The leaders of the program will never see the answers you give or the information we wrote about you.

#### **Do you have to be in the study?**

You do not have to be in the study. No one will get angry or upset with you if you don't want to do this. Just let me know you don't want to be in the study. And remember, if you decide to be in the study but later you change your mind, then you can tell me you do not want to be in the study anymore.

**Do you have any questions?**

You can ask questions at any time. You can talk to me at any time during the study. Here is how you can contact me.

Ashley Johnson, Brock University, 905 688-5550, ext. 4366 or 905 708 4274.  
aj03bw@brocku.ca

**If you want to be in the study, please print your name on the line below:**

Child's name printed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the researcher printed: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix H

### Family Interview Guide

Hi \_(name)\_. How are you? How has your summer been going? Have you done anything exciting so far? So today, I am just going to ask you a few questions about the Children's Movement Program, some of your after school activities and school, while I am going to ask your \_(parent)\_ about some of the same things. I have questions for everyone, so sometimes we are going to have to wait for others to answer, but everyone will get a turn ok? Also, I'm going to be recording while we talk, so I can listen to it again later. Does that sound ok?

1. How old are you?
2. How many years have you had (a) child(ren) enrolled in the Children's Movement Program?
3. What grade are you in?
4. How did you hear about the Children's Movement Program?
5. What are your favourite things to do? Do you do them alone or with others?
6. What characteristics of the Children's Movement Program enticed you to enrol your child(ren)?
7. Do you like school? What is your favourite subject?
8. Is this the first community-based program your child(ren) has attended?
9. Can you describe to me what you do in the Children's Movement Program (CMP)?
10. What do you hope that your child will get out of being a participant in the Children's Movement Program?
11. What have you learned from being in CMP?
12. What positive factors are associated with your child(ren)'s enrolment in the Children's Movement Program?
13. What do you like about CMP?
14. Can you highlight any major differences that you have viewed within your child since his or her enrolment in the Children's Movement Program?
15. What do you not like about CMP?

16. Can you describe any changes in your child(ren)'s approach or eagerness to come to CMP on Saturday mornings?
17. Have you made any new friends in CMP?
18. Have you noticed any of the skills being developed in CMP transferring over to other settings or activities your child(ren) engages in? If so can you provide an example?
19. What do you think about the activities that you do in CMP?
20. Has the enrolment in the Children's Movement Program contributed to the development of your son or daughters social skills? If so how?
21. Have you been in any other programs other than CMP? If so what?
22. Can you describe any changes in your child(ren)'s social connections after his or her (their) involvement in the program
23. Is CMP similar to your school gym class? What is the same? What is different?
24. What were your child's reactions to the program? Did you notice any significant transformations in his or her interaction in a group setting?
25. Similar to school, is there a teacher-leader? What does the teacher-leader do? Generally speaking what do you see as the teacher-leader main role?
26. Can you provide any anecdotal responses from your child about his or her like or dislike for the program?
27. Can you remember how long you have been in the program? (your mom/dad) mentioned \_\_\_\_ years. Can you describe your involvement since that time? Has there been anything different. Do you like it better or less?
28. How can the instructors contribute to fostering social skills within the program's participants? Is there anything specifically, that they do now which you feel are contributing factors?
29. Can you remember one event from CMP that you really really liked?
30. If you were to give advice to new parents about the benefits of community-based programs, what would it be and why?
31. Thank you very much; your stories have been very helpful. Is there anything else you want to tell me or ask me?
32. Is there any other feedback or comments you would like to provide about the program?



### Appendix I – Social Skills Checklist

Social Skills	Characteristics	Yes	No	Notes
Basic	Listening to others - adult			
	Listening to others - child			
	Initiating a conversation			
	Asking a question			
	Saying thank you			
	Verbally introducing self			
	Verbally giving a compliment to another			
	Asking for help			
	Physically joining in a group activity			
	Following instructions from leader			
	Apologizing to a peer or adult			
	Expressing feelings			
	Demonstrating empathy			
	Expressing affection			
	Trying a given task			
	Showing off an accomplishment			
	Asking permission			
	Sharing; helping			
	Negotiating with others			
	Using self-control			
	Responding to teasing			
	Avoiding trouble with others			
	Removing self from conflict			
Complex	Making and answering a complaint			
	Showing good sportsmanship in activity			
	Joining in a new environment			
	Standing up for a friend			
	Responding to persuasion and to failure			
	Participating in a group setting, with possibility of peer pressure			
	Engaging in a difficult conversation.			

Modified from Goldstein & McGinnis (1997)

**Appendix J**  
**Observation Schedule on Saturday**

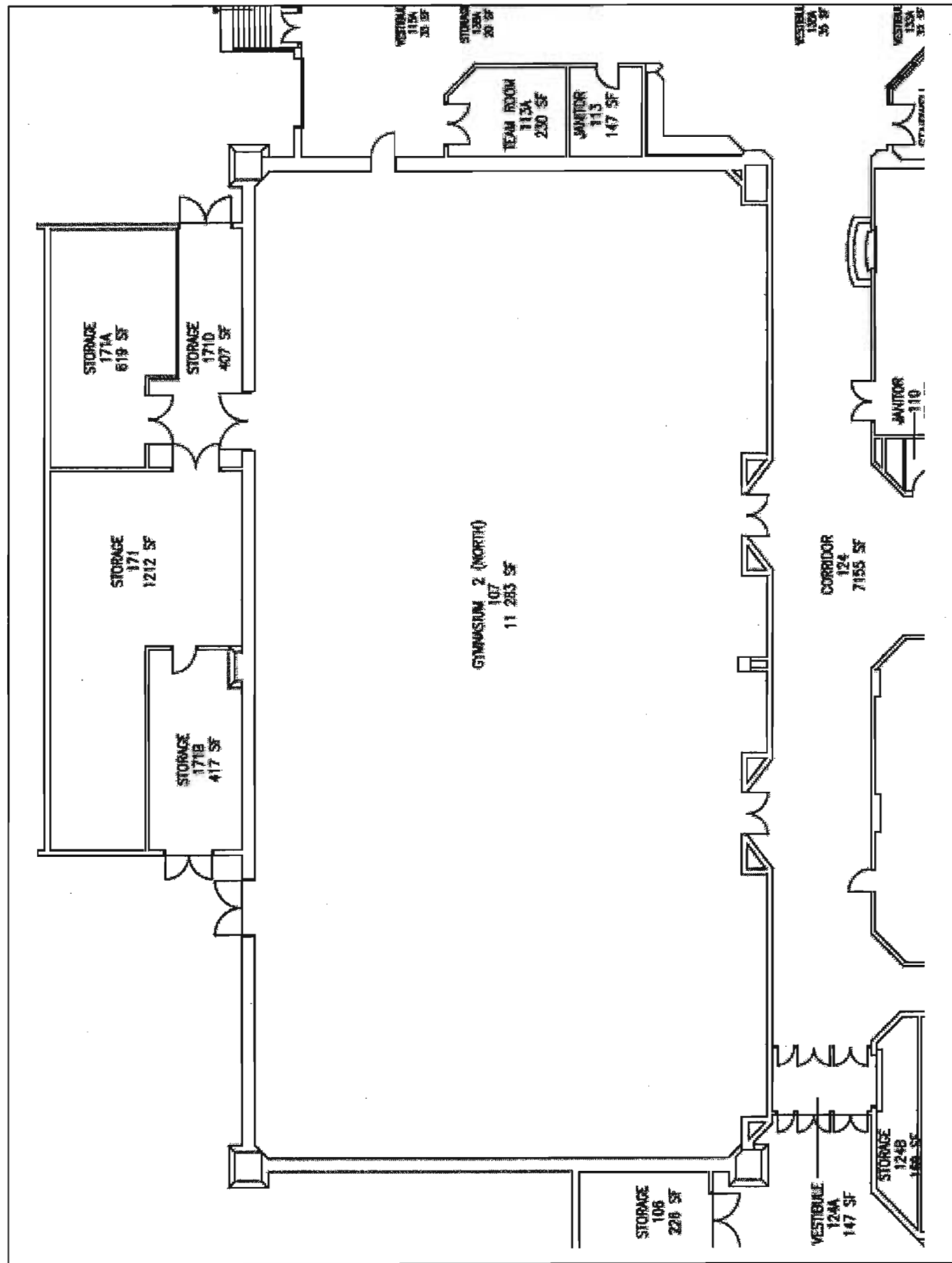
**Duration 1 (September 2009 – November 2009)**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
8:00 a.m.	Lead volunteers in equipment set-up
8:30 a.m.	Instructors explain activities to volunteers
8:45 a.m.	Staff/Volunteer circle time Song "I'm alive, awake, alert, enthusiastic"
9:00 a.m.	Session 1: Children arrive, talk to parents
9:10 a.m.	Observations begin – Participant one
9:20 a.m.	Participant two
9:30 a.m.	Participant three
9:40 a.m.	Participant four
9:50 a.m.	Participant five
10:00 a.m.	Session 2: Children arrive, talk to parents
10:10 a.m.	Participant one
10:20 a.m.	Participant two
10:30 a.m.	Participant three
11:00 a.m.	Session 3: Children arrive, talk to parents
11:10 a.m.	Participant one
11:20 a.m.	Participant two

## Interview Schedule - Appendix K

Family Name	Parent	Code	Child	Code	Age	Interview Date	Interview Place	Interview Format	Interview Length	Transcript Length	CMP Duration
S	A	A	D	A1	9	November 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2009	Brock	PCI/FUI	48:40	P-11 pages C-9 pages	D1
K	J	B	K	B1	9	November 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2009	House	FUI	32:09	12 pages	D1
	E										
D-T	S	C	L	C1	6	October 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2009	Brock	FUI	26:31	7 pages	D1
			J	C2	6						D1
B	J	D	J	D1	6	November 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2009	Brock	PCI	P-38:54 C-15:11	P-9 pages C- 5 pages	D1
S-W	D	E	J	E1	7	November 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2009	Brock	FUI	31:44	9 pages	D1
C	L	F	D	F1	6	November 20 <sup>th</sup> , 2009	Home	FUI	36:57	8 pages	D1
B	R	G	A	G1	6	January 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2010	Brock	FUI	28:36	9 pages	D1
T	T	H	I	H2	5	December 2, 2009	Home	FUI	100:42	20 pages	D1
V	M	I	N	I1	5	March 20 <sup>th</sup> , 2010	Brock	FUI	29:40	15 pages	D2
R	B	J	A	J1	7	March 20 <sup>th</sup> , 2010	Brock	FUI	36:57	10 pages	D2
			A	J2	5						
T	W	K	H	K1	5	March 20 <sup>th</sup> , 2010	Brock	FUI	29:38	13 pages	D2
			N	K2	7						
Z-F	R	L	I	L1	8	April 8 <sup>th</sup>	Home	FUI	42:18	8 pages	D2

# Appendix L – Gymnasium 2 Outline



**Appendix M**  
**Categories and Themes from Interview Transcripts**

Meaning Coding	Meaning Condensation
<p><b><i>Environment</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The gravitation was that it was in a gym, we have an arena here, and with the arena there is a lot of emphasis on hockey and skating. I wanted them to be in something that they are active but be exposed to a wider variety of activities” (R)</li> <li>• “It is a well organized activity that gives the kids, you know there is a different theme every week, it keeps the kids active, keeps the kids within their age groups” (T)</li> <li>• “The facility you have here is amazing and the equipment is awesome, such a variety” (D).</li> <li>• “But you look at it, in 8 weeks they are all running around, they know each other and never a cross word between any of them, I have never seen one person upset. You put 15 kids together at school, there is going to be someone who is picked on. But in this environment they are all running around willy nilly, they talk to each other and stop and play and never a cross work, It is a very positive environment” (Brian).</li> <li>• “Myyyy favourite thing about CMP is the gym” (A).</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Indirect Learning</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “In gym you have to do something specific, where in CMP you can ride a scooter, play hide and go seek, and do what you choose. It doesn’t feel like she’s instructing you, it feels more like you are playing with a friend” (I)</li> <li>• “After we come out of there, they say ‘I don’t want to go swimming, I don’t want to go swimming’, there is a huge difference in going to swimming, it’s very rigid and for them its three quarters of an hour they make them work. He comes out of the program sweating and has almost run a mile, but he doesn’t know it, he does 10 times the amount in there that he does in swimming, but they don’t even know it” (B).</li> <li>• “She makes it fun for them, she actually teaches when they don’t know they are being taught, and that’s why I think it’s just a success. Some days if you look and pay attention you see that they are learning a dance, but the instructors make it so fun, they have no idea they are in class for an hour” (B).</li> </ul>

<p><b><i>Apparatus and equipment</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I wanted them to do something physical and run around. What I like about it is there are all these different apparatus and that they are climbing and balancing and walking and that they are using the gymnastics equipment, but not specifically for gymnastics. I like the availability of that” (R)</li> <li>• “I’ve heard that the YMCA (Games Galore) is boring. He’s really upset because there isn’t any equipment like at Brock” (L).</li> <li>• “I get to swing on the ropes and slide down the bench and walk on the balance beam” (A).</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Indirect Learning</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “In gym you have to do something specific, where in CMP you can ride a scooter, play hide and go seek, and do what you choose. It doesn’t feel like she’s instructing you, it feels more like you are playing with a friend” (I)</li> <li>• “After we come out of there, they say ‘I don’t want to go swimming, I don’t want to go swimming’, there is a huge difference in going to swimming, it’s very rigid and for them its three quarters of an hour they make them work. He comes out of the program sweating and has almost run a mile, but he doesn’t know it, he does 10 times the amount in there that he does in swimming, but they don’t even know it” (B).</li> <li>• “She makes it fun for them, she actually teaches when they don’t know they are being taught, and that’s why I think it’s just a success. Some days if you look and pay attention you see that they are learning a dance, but the instructors make it so fun, they have no idea they are in class for an hour” (B).</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>The Philosophy behind the fun</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I was really impressed by your approach to physical education, because you broke it down into individual movements. It’s difficult to incorporate him into a group game, but here he is still getting the same skills, like</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Contrast to Competitive Nature</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “This is a great activity for children that is less structured than let’s say soccer or any other team sports” (B).</li> <li>• “We can’t get him to do anything, he doesn’t want to swim, he doesn’t want to do baseball, he doesn’t want to do</li> </ul>

kicking a soccer ball, that is the main reason it appealed to me” (L).

- “When you were teaching them to throw the ball I don’t think I ever in my brain broke it down like that. You broke it down into the different parts” (L).
- “It’s a Saturday morning program where kids go and they teach them how to stretch through different games and how to move your body in different ways” (A).
- “What I really like is that it’s part of the curriculum at Brock” (J)
- “I tell all parents to put their kids in gross motor, swimming, gymnastics, dance” (S)
- “That’s why I like this program, its the whole concept of movement, they are learning the large body skills than eventually they are going to be able to do the smaller specialized ones” (S).

soccer, he doesn’t want to do team sports because I don’t think he doesn’t want to be the one who’s not fantastic, where at this he fully just blends in and has fun” (B).

- “I think parents today are so concerned with getting their kids in sports early so they can be the best instead of putting them into it because it is good for them and to have fun, its making kids like being active” (S).
- “I avoid organized sport, we have tried soccer, but it’s too chaotic or the skills it not known and it’s frustrating and there isn’t enough time for one on one instruction (A).
- “Because it was no pressure and fun” (J).
- “That’s what I like, you are working among peers, and unlike other organizations that say you know its YOUR turn and its very all eyes are on them, where here there isn’t that” (J).
- “I firmly believe that kids are pushed into game situations too early in life, I don’t think they can cognitively or socially handle it at that age, I think one kid will dominate whether they are the best or the fastest or the most aggressive, I don’t feel the other kids get a chance, if they are a little on the timid side they really don’t get a chance” (S).

## Appendix N Ethics Clearance

DATE: July 13, 2009  
FROM: Michelle McGinn, Chair

Research Ethics Board (REB)

TO: Mike Plyley, Physical Education & Kinesiology  
Ashley Johnson, James Mandigo

FILE: 08-323 PLYLEY/JOHNSON  
Masters Thesis/Project

TITLE: A case study of Brock University's Children's Movement Program examining social development of primary aged children

The Brock University Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above research proposal.

**DECISION: ACCEPTED AS CLARIFIED**

This project has received ethics clearance for the period of **July 13, 2009 to August 31, 2010** subject to full REB ratification at the Research Ethics Board's next scheduled meeting. The clearance period may be extended upon request. *The study may now proceed.*

Please note that the Research Ethics Board (REB) requires that you adhere to the protocol as last reviewed and cleared by the REB. During the course of research no deviations from, or changes to, the protocol, recruitment, or consent form may be initiated without prior written clearance from the REB. The Board must provide clearance for any modifications before they can be implemented. If you wish to modify your research project, please refer to <http://www.brocku.ca/researchservices/forms> to complete the appropriate form Revision or Modification to an Ongoing Application.

Adverse or unexpected events must be reported to the REB as soon as possible with an indication of how these events affect, in the view of the Principal Investigator, the safety of the participants and the continuation of the protocol.

If research participants are in the care of a health facility, at a school, or other institution or community organization, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that the ethical guidelines and clearance of those facilities or institutions are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of any research protocols.

The Tri-Council Policy Statement requires that ongoing research be monitored. A Final Report is required for all projects upon completion of the project. Researchers with projects lasting more than one year are required to submit a Continuing Review Report annually. The Office of Research Services will contact you when this form *Continuing Review/Final Report* is required.

Please quote your REB file number on all future correspondence.

Research Ethics Office  
Brock Research, MC D250A-1  
Brock University